Lenten Preaching

MORTIMER

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Lenten Preaching.

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THREE COURSES
OF
SERMONS FOR LENT.

FIRST COURSE *THE LENTEN EPISTLES.*

SECOND COURSE *THE EXAMPLE OF OUR LORD.*

THIRD COURSE *THE SEVEN LAST WORDS.*

BY THE REV.
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"SERMONS ON THE SEVEN LAST WORDS," ETC.

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TO MY DEAR MOTHER

I DEDICATE THESE ADDRESSES

WITH THE PRAYER THAT

IN KEEPING HER EIGHTY-FOURTH LENT

SHE MAY FIND THEM HELPFUL.

LIBRARY

Preface.

Of these Sermons the first and last Courses were preached in S. Mark's, Philadelphia, during Lent, 1901; those on "Our Lord as our Example," during a previous Lent.

They are all reproduced from stenographer's reports, and no attempt has been made to do more than correct obvious errors and to remove a few topical allusions.

A. G. M.

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First Course.

SIX SERMONS ON THE LENTEN EPISTLES.

Lenten Preaching.

FIRST COURSE—THE EPISTLES.

I.

First Sunday in Lent.

2 Cor. vi. 1.

"We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."

THE two most solemn words in our language are, perhaps, the words "opportunity" and "responsibility." And they mutually connote one another, for every opportunity involves a corresponding responsibility, and every real responsibility implies an opportunity. It will help us to realize the solemnity which attaches to opportunity if we call to mind that the most bitter regrets of life are our regrets for lost opportunities.

First Sunday in Lent.

I.

It has been said that to every one comes his opportunity in life; often it is not recognized at the time, but afterwards, when we look back and see that we wasted or lost our one opportunity, how bitter is the thought!

Think of the man of business who sees the opportunity of his lifetime after it has passed; the man of letters who looks back upon school and college days wasted, and realizes that then was the time when he might have laid the foundations of scholarship, which now he can never attain to; the friend who looks back upon the opportunity for explanation or forgiveness in that quarrel which parted him from the one he loved best in life—parted him for all life. Yes, the bitterest thought of life, the most poignant regret, is that which belongs to lost opportunities.

But not only is this the case in this world, but this will be one of the chief punishments of the lost in eternity—the torments of remorse; the torments of self-reproach; the thought, I had my opportunity to save my soul, to win heaven, and I lost it!

So in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus,

when the rich man, in his torments, lifts up his eyes, and says, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame," the answer is, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things"; that is, remember that thou hadst thine opportunity and thou hast lost it.

So again, when our Lord, on Palm Sunday, wept over Jerusalem, He said, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; *because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*" *

Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation, thou didst not recognize the time of repentance. Yes, the bitterest grief in time, the most agonizing remorse of eternity, is the regret which comes for lost opportunities!

* S. Luke xix. 42-44.

II.

We have crossed the threshold of another Lent. We have entered upon another season of grace, another season of opportunity; opportunity which involves responsibility, and responsibility which may be eternal. For how much may not a good death depend upon the way we spent our last Lent? If we were earnest and devout, searching in our self-examination, thorough in all our repentance, what could be a better preparation for a good death? When we come to die, if our friends can say of us that our last Lent was so well kept, if our guardian angel can say this, how thankful we shall be! And so the Church addresses to us these words of warning and of opportunity. "We beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of GOD in vain. . . . Behold now is the accepted time! Behold now is the day of salvation."

Lent is indeed an accepted time, a day of salvation, a season of abundant opportunity, for in Lent all over the world the Church is praying for the conversion of sinners, pleading the Holy Sacrifice for them; and not only the Church on earth, but the Church in heaven. Saints and angels look down upon us during Lent with loving sympathy,

with deep anxiety, helping us by their prayers. And then there are the multitude of services in the Churches, the many offerings of the Holy Eucharist, the earnest exhortations, the spiritual instructions, the private prayers, all these help to make Lent a season of marvellous grace.

On this account it is easier to repent in Lent, easier to conquer our sins in Lent, easier to make sacrifices, to do disagreeable duties, to learn about GOD and His revelation to man. In other words, Lent is the great opportunity of the Christian year, and, as no one knows but that this may be their last Lent, and therefore the great opportunity of life, let us all listen to the earnest exhortation which comes to us from the altar in the words of the Epistle, "We beseech you that ye receive not the grace of GOD in vain."

S. Paul had written his first Epistle to the Corinthians to rebuke them for certain deadly sins which were rife among them, and especially to excommuncate an individual member of their Church who had given grievous scandal in the community, and to set right certain disorders which had come to his knowledge. In his second Epistle he writes to express his thankfulness for their repentance (of

which he has been informed), and to tell them of the certainty of GOD'S pardoning mercy; but in these words he warns them not to presume on that mercy, not to receive the grace of absolution in vain. He reminds them that *now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation. He beseeches them not to waste it, not to lose it.

He begins his exhortation with the words, "We, as workers together with GOD," and this teaches us one of the characteristics of grace — that unless we correspond to it, it is powerless to do us any good. Grace is given to help our free will, not to over-ride it. Grace is GOD'S work in the soul, the very life of GOD in the soul; but that work, that life, depends on our own action. We must be workers together with GOD, or we shall receive the grace in vain.

III.

If one may use an inadequate illustration, grace is something like electricity—a mysterious power, little understood in regard to its nature, and yet easily seen in its effects. For of all the forces of nature electricity is, perhaps, the most mysterious and the most weird. How little we know about it!

and our knowledge is almost entirely empirical. For we have gained what we know of electricity by watching its effects, by making experiments and seeing how it works, and so learning what we call its laws, which, however, are not laws, but merely observed phenomena.

How mighty it is in its strength, as we watch the lurid lightning flash and hear the thunderclap! How mighty it is in its destructive force, where the lightning has struck some giant tree or lofty tower and rent them! It is as though they were but toys. How mighty is its power and utility, as we watch the great dynamos generating the electricity which supplies the motive force for all the machinery in a great factory; or which keeps in motion the cars upon miles of railroad!

And yet how delicate in its operations, registering through the telephone the slightest vibration of the human voice at a distance of a thousand miles; flashing in a few seconds its messages around the globe; laughing alike at time and space!

And yet this mighty force is useless to man unless its laws are obeyed. Man lived upon this globe from the time of his birth through centuries

upon centuries, with the force electricity all around him, but quite useless to him ; and even now that he has discovered its usefulness, he must comply with its laws absolutely to gain their beneficent effect. A break in the wire, and the current stops ; or imperfect insulation and the current is grounded, and the electricity which could have produced such great results goes off into the earth and is lost.

How like grace, the mightiest power in the spiritual world !—the power which has made of weak men and women Christian heroes, saints, and martyrs! the power which has enabled men to face torments and death for Christ! the power which has enabled weak men and women to bear the burden of life for long weary years ; to endure, to run with patience the race, to win the prize!

And how diverse in its operations! At one time breaking the hardened sinner's rocky heart, at another, by its delicate operations, lifting the ecstatic soul into closest union with GOD.

And yet it has its laws like electricity—laws which are simple, but imperative. For grace to flow into our souls there must be no interruption to our union with GOD, no interruption in the link which binds us to GOD. One act of mortal sin and the

link is broken, the current is interrupted, the life of the soul—grace—is lost.

Or again, if it be not used, how soon it is wasted and lost, like the electric current wasted by the grounded wire. It is wasted in the life—not of mortal sin—but of worldliness, of earthiness. Grace may be received through Sacraments, through many communions, and yet may be received in vain, may pass—not into the soul to supply it with glorious power to win victories for GOD, but may be utterly wasted by our carelessness, by our indifference, by our neglect to use it.

IV.

And so the Church at the beginning of her great season of opportunity, gives us this warning: "We, then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of GOD in vain." She does not merely exhort us to seek grace, but she warns us of the danger even after we have sought and received grace; the danger of not using it. In Lent grace is all around you, and yet it is possible for you to pass through Lent and be utterly untouched by its power, because of the want of correspondence of your will, because you are not workers

together with GOD. For all, Lent is the living out of the parable of the sower. But for some, Lent is like the seed which fell by the wayside; lying there unused, wasted, sown, but sown in vain!

Let us therefore on the first Sunday in Lent resolve to pray not only for grace, but for grace to use the grace we receive; and with our prayers let us determine to watch for opportunities, not only of receiving grace, but of using grace.

One of the laws of grace is that it only manifests itself in action. We say our prayers in the morning, we ask for grace to resist sin, and GOD gives the grace; but the temptation comes as before, and the question is, Shall I use that grace, or not? How can I use it? By an act of my will, by realizing that I have that grace, and *willing* to use it. How much prayer is wasted because we pray for grace to resist sin, and then when temptation comes, for want of watchfulness or for want of faith, we make no effort of our own to use the grace for which we prayed, to work together with GOD, Who is Almighty, in the battle against the sin which so easily besets us. The sin may be great, the habit of sin long standing, but the grace of GOD is greater, for

the grace of GOD is almighty, and it only needs that we should use it.

And so I end as I began, with the Church's exhortation, "We beseech you that ye receive not the grace of GOD in vain."

II.

Second Sunday in Lent.

1 Thess. iv. 3.

"This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

THE Epistle last Sunday contained words of warning not to receive the grace of God in vain. The Epistle to-day brings us words of encouragement; for it tells us that we have on our side the mightiest force that this world knows —the almighty will of God. That will, which by its fiat, called into being every creature that exists— from the giant mountain range standing in grand relief against the azure sky, to the tiniest atom which the microscope alone can reveal to our sight; from the intellect of the greatest philosopher, to the instinct of the tiniest insect.

The will of God called all things into being, and conserves all things in existence by its power. And the message which the Church brings to our fainting souls to-day, is that this almighty will

is on our side in the great battle with evil; that this will is concerned in our salvation.

I.

Before we proceed to a further consideration of the text, there are two words in it which we must examine carefully. The words "will" and "sanctification." To take the latter first, what precisely is meant by our sanctification? I am not concerned now with the theological controversy in regard to the difference between "sanctification" and "justification," but simply with the sense in which the word is used in Holy Scripture. We find it many times both in the Old and New Testaments, for the Hebrew "Qadesh" is equivalent to the Greek *ἁγιασμός*, as we find from the use of this word in the Septuagint wherever "Qadesh" occurs in the Hebrew. If we open our Bibles we shall find that it is applied both to things and persons. In the very second chapter of Genesis we have the word applied to the seventh day. "And GOD blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." * In the next book, Exodus, it is applied to a mountain—to Mount Sinai. "Set bounds about the mount and sanctify it." † Later

* Gen. ii. 3. † Ex. xix. 23.

in the same book we find it used of the altar. "And thou shalt cleanse the altar . . . to sanctify it." * And then, in the same chapter, of the tabernacle—"I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation." † It is quite clear, therefore, that the first and most general meaning of sanctification is setting apart or consecrating, since no moral change can be conceived of in regard to a day, or a mountain, or an altar, or a tabernacle.

In the same chapter of Exodus we find the word applied to persons—to Aaron and his sons. "I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to Me in the Priest's office." ‡ And, not to multiply further examples in the Old Testament, we find our Lord saying of Himself, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself"; § where the word cannot mean make holy, since our Lord was the Holy One of GOD, but implies, as in all the previous passages, a setting apart, a consecrating.

From this first meaning in the case of persons (not of things), flows the second and more generally accepted meaning, namely, a moral or spiritual change, for such a change must follow necessarily

* Ex. xxix. 36. † Ex. xxix. 44. ‡ Ex. xxix. 44.
§ S. John xvii. 19.

from a life of separation from the world, from a life of consecration to GOD.

When, therefore, the text tells us that it is GOD'S will that we should be sanctified, it seems to me that it means, first, that it is GOD'S will that we should be separated from the world—in the world, but not of the world. As our Lord prayed, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth." * And this is what we mean by the Greek word for Church (ἐκκλησία)—called out, separated.

But this separation from the world is only the negative side of the work of sanctification, the positive side of which is consecration to GOD; for we are not separated from the world only, but consecrated to the service of GOD. And this again is suggested by our English word Church, which is derived from a Greek word, which signifies "belonging to the Lord."

"This is the will of GOD, even your sanctification," we may then paraphrase thus—This is the will of GOD, that you should be separated from the

* S. John xvii. 15-17.

world; that instead of having the world as your master and your end, you should be consecrated to GOD, having Him for your Lord, belonging to Him, being children of GOD, walking as children of light. And thus we see that our sanctification will indeed end in our becoming holy.

The other word which we must notice is the word "will." Here again we have a word about which there has been great controversy—the controversy which is connected with the terms "predestination" and "election."

For some, following Calvin, have thought and taught that the will of GOD really is that some individuals in the world should be saved, but that others should be lost. And this doctrine, so revolting to man's moral sense, and so derogatory to GOD'S love and justice, they think that they find in certain passages of Holy Scripture, especially in S. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

Without entering at all into the theological side of the controversy, we may notice here that a great deal of the seeming difficulty is removed if, following the teaching of S. John of Damascus, we recognize two "wills" in GOD: His "antecedent" will and His "consequent" will; for in Greek there are

two distinct words representing our word "will" (βουλή and θέλημα), both of which are found in the New Testament applied to the will of GOD. In one passage we have the two words in the same clause, "Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the *counsel* of His own *will*."* Here the word βουλή is translated "counsel," and the word θέλημα "will." The antecedent will of GOD is θέλημα, it is the will by which He wills all men to be saved; the will by which He wills our sanctification. It is called "antecedent" because it is GOD'S original will for man. His consequent will is βουλή or His counsel, or as we should sometimes call it, His foreknowledge. This it is which takes into consideration man's free will—man's resistance to GOD'S grace, man's deliberate rejection of GOD'S offer of salvation. Hence it is quite untrue to say, as the Calvinists do, that GOD wills (with His antecedent will) that some shall be lost. GOD is omniscient. With Him there is no past and present and future, but all things are present; and so, in willing the salvation of each individual of the race, GOD knows how that individual will use his free will; and

* Eph. i. 11.

His consequent will (His βουλή) accepts the fact that some particular individual will misuse his opportunity of salvation, will rebel against GOD with his free will, will receive the grace of GOD in vain. But GOD'S consequent will does not in the least cause this. On the contrary, GOD *wills* (with His antecedent or original will) all men to be saved. GOD wills your salvation, and in that will provides for each one *sufficient* grace to enable him to attain salvation.

II.

"This is the will of GOD, even your sanctification." From this it follows that GOD'S providence will order the circumstances of our life, with an end to our sanctification.

1. By supplying us with opportunities of grace sufficient to enable us to work out our salvation. Sufficient—for if we had more grace we probably should not use it. GOD gives all that we need. Of this we treated last Sunday.

2. By opportunities of discipline. This is the key to the mystery of suffering; that it is a means of sanctification, included in GOD'S will for our sanctification, supplied by GOD'S providence to help

forward our sanctification. Consider some of the opportunities of discipline which come to us by GOD'S will, for the purpose of sanctifying us.

(*i.*) The discipline of pain. How differently pain works in souls. To some who "receive not the grace of GOD in vain," it is a great opportunity of using grace; and then again it develops the character; it unites us to our Blessed Lord in His Passion, and is the means by which, like Simon of Cyrene, we bear the Cross after Christ—bear it gladly, like S. Paul, who said, "I . . . now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church." *

With others pain has the opposite effect. It makes them peevish and discontented. It makes them rebellious against GOD, and hardened to His grace. GOD knows (and therefore with His consequent will permits) that in some, through their own fault, pain shall only embitter and harden them.

(*ii.*) The discipline of sorrow. What opposite results sorrow produces in different souls! To those who bear their sorrow trusting in Divine grace, receiving not the grace of GOD in vain, what a won-

* Col. i. 24.

derful power sorrow has for developing the soul! It eradicates self-love, it deepens sympathy, it reveals the mystery of our Lord's Passion.

"Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow." * How little can those who have never had real sorrow in their life, enter into the mystery of the sorrows of our Blessed Lord. For them the Cross is a terrible tragedy, a marvellous exhibition of Divine love, a wonderful drama of Divine patience. But as a mystery of sorrow, how little can they enter into it! The pains, the physical pains, they realize; the humiliation, the desertion by friends, yes; but the sorrow! the sorrow of contemplating from the Cross the souls for whom He died, but who would pass Him by; the sorrow of knowing those who would hear the story of His love, and would turn away from Him; the sorrow of loving and of having that love rejected! How little they realize this.

And then there is the sorrow of following into another world those souls who would not be saved, and seeing their future among the lost. Who can realize the sorrows of the Passion, but those who have been taught by the discipline of sorrow; who

* Lam. i. 12.

have tasted the bitter cup of bereavement, of unrequited affection, of disappointed love, of trust betrayed?

Wonderful is the power of sorrow to mellow and deepen character, if that sorrow be borne with reliance upon the Holy Ghost, in the power of GOD'S grace; but if we receive the grace of GOD in vain, if we bear our sorrows in a spirit of self-pity, or of bitter rebellion, or of mere dogged endurance, how they sour the nature! "This is the will of GOD, even your sanctification"—and sorrow is part of GOD'S disciplinary providence, and a great means of sanctification.

(*iii.*) The discipline of temptation. Not only must we bear that pain and sorrow which is the inheritance of every child of Adam, but we have to meet the forces of temptation, the powers of the Evil One, who, with a skill gained from the experience of thousands of years, turns and twists his arguments exactly to suit our own special weakness. He attacks first one part of our nature and then another, he persecutes us with the darts of temptation, with relentless industry, with tireless energy, until, as a result of his temptations, he has either helped us to work out our sanctification, to develop

by resistance to temptation, all the latent forces of our soul, to strengthen the will into splendid conformity with GOD'S will, or he has succeeded in ruining our souls by breaking down the will, poisoning the intellect, perverting the affection, shattering GOD'S image in us!

(*iv.*) The discipline of work. How much our sanctification depends on this! How many have found GOD'S vocation in work faithfully done! The Magi studying the stars are led to Christ. S. Peter, in obedience, doing his work as a fisherman, receives his vocation as the fisher of men. How great is the dignity of labour if we offer our work to GOD; if we do it as in His presence, and for His glory! And if not, how different is the effect of work upon the soul! With how many the drudgery of life kills all aspirations for higher things, blunts the more delicate powers of the soul, reduces a man to a mere machine!

III.

"This is the will of GOD, even your sanctification." Surely this is indeed a Lenten text, for Lent is the special time for renewing our consecration to GOD by retirement from the world, for using

such exercises of religion as may develop the spiritual powers of our nature. Lent is a time for meditation on the power and love of that almighty will of GOD, which first called us into being, and now, and ever, concerns itself in our individual salvation. What courage this thought arouses in the fainting soul! I have on my side the mightiest force, the force which called this world into being. Though all things and men and the powers of evil were against me, if GOD were on my side I need not fear what they can do unto me. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" *

* Psalm xxvii. 1.

III.

Third Sunday in Lent.

EPH. V. 2.

"Walk in love."

EPH. V. 8.

"Walk as children of light."

E find both these passages in the Epistle for to-day. In the Epistle for the first Sunday in Lent we had a word of warning—that we receive not the grace of GOD in vain. In that for last Sunday, a word of encouragement—that GOD wills our sanctification. In this for the third Sunday in Lent we have words of *positive* direction in regard to Christian life. Life is often represented under the image of a journey; hence the injunction to walk.

Life to the Christian ought to be a journey *home*. His heart set on the end of his journey, his hopes stimulating him when weary, his mind filled with thoughts of home and what he will find awaiting

him there. But the two great characteristics of our home in heaven are "light" and "love"—light that knows no darkness, and love that fears no change.

Heaven, however, for us is no mere term of moral effort awaiting us in the far future; it is, in a sense, our present possession, for even now we are citizens of heaven, "our conversation is in heaven," * and so we should expect light and love, which in their fulness are the great rewards of heaven, to be the principal aim of our life here, though in this life we can have them only in part, and in order to retain what we have of them, we must watch and be ever ready to fight, lest we be robbed of these possessions by our foe, the devil.

Christian life then may be summed up in two words, "light" and "love"; for as we look out upon life we see everywhere a conflict between good and evil, between light and darkness, between love and sin. In the Epistle for to-day, this conflict is brought before us as a contrast between light and darkness, between love and sin. In the Gospel we have the same contrast of the powers of good and evil, each exhibited under its supreme representative,

* Phil. iii. 20.

the strong man armed—the devil; and the stronger Who overcomes him—Christ.

In the spiritual combat, the powers of good and evil are each striving to rule man's will, and that they may accomplish their purpose, they approach the will for the most part through man's two faculties —the affections and the intellect; for the two dominant passions of the human soul are "to love" and "to know." The heart craves for something to love, something worthy of love, and GOD offers man nothing less than Himself as the object of love; while Satan directs man's attention to the creatures, extols their beauty, exaggerates their power of gratifying man's desires, and offers them as the object of man's affections.

On the other hand, man's mind is restless in its thirst for knowledge, in its desire to gratify curiosity, and GOD offers, what alone can satisfy the mind, the knowledge of Himself, "Whom to know is life eternal"; while Satan tries to interest the mind in the passing things of earth, which can never satisfy.

Hence, the Apostle says, "Walk in love," "Walk as children of light."

Love without light is better than light without

love. The religion of the heart alone is worth more than the religion of the head alone; the first may produce a sincere Christian, though imperfect and perhaps weak; while the latter, light without love, can produce only the most fearful of all characters—a character truly diabolical. Such a character we see in the Prince of Evil himself, who once was Lucifer, an archangel of light, who retains to a great extent his marvellous intellect, but an intellect absolutely divorced from love, and therefore employed always in works of darkness. Let us consider each injunction.

I.

Walk as children of light. How the human mind craves to know! How strong in the human soul is the passion of curiosity! The pursuit of knowledge is one of the few interests in life which never palls. The scholar with his books, the man of science with his experiments, alike grow old, but their ruling passion does not, as other passions, burn itself out. The student as he grows old appreciates more and more the treasures of knowledge, and dies with his thirst for knowledge as keen as when he began to study.

The scientist, too, sees ever widening out before him new fields of investigation which promise a still richer harvest, and he realizes as he leaves his work to others that he has only scratched the surface of nature's mysterious fields, those fields which yield the secrets of their hidden treasure so reluctantly to man.

And yet this passion of curiosity, which, if disciplined, is such a splendid gift making for knowledge, if undisciplined has its serious dangers. We see in the story of the Fall how it led to the first sin; and there are many now who can trace back to it much of the evil of their lives.

The desire for *light* which GOD has implanted in man's nature Satan endeavours to pervert, and for light to substitute darkness in the soul, the thirst for good, he tries to assuage with a knowledge of evil, and thus we find that some are satisfied with the knowledge of creatures only, of this material world; but nobler souls pass from a knowledge of creatures to seek the knowledge of the Creator, of GOD.

The passion of curiosity implanted in the soul by GOD Himself, as the great factor for knowledge, impels some to search out only the things

glorious prophecies, but tempted the children of Israel to sin—like the son of Beor, the man whose eyes were opened, who heard the words of GOD, who saw the vision of the Almighty, and yet who died miserably fighting against those very Israelites, whom in GOD'S Name he had blessed.

We must indeed walk not only in light but in love, and in this injunction of S. Paul we have not only a command, but the reason of the command. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to GOD for a sweet-smelling savour." * We must love because GOD first loved us; because as we look up at the Crucifix we see *how* GOD loved us; for "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." We see how GOD gave Himself for us an offering and sacrifice; and love feeds on sacrifice; so that if we love Him we shall strive to show our love by offering ourselves, our souls, and bodies to be a living sacrifice.

Love is the purifying and regenerating force of life. All that is most beautiful on earth comes from love—the love of parents, how beautiful! the

* Eph. v. 2.

love of home, how elevating! the love of country, how noble!

What glorious deeds these have produced! The sacrifice of parent for child, and child for parent; the sacrifice of patriots for home and country. But these deeds, splendid as they are, sink into insignificance in comparison with those glorious actions which the love of GOD has inspired, and which we see in the lives of the Saints and the deaths of the Martyrs! Love is the ennobling influence in human life—even human love. How much more the love of GOD!

But not only is the power of love the power which elevates character, it has, like fire, a strange property—it is contagious; it spreads from one to another. Our Lord said, "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled?"* He came indeed to light anew the spark of Divine love that it might spread from heart to heart, from life to life. If we walk in love, how glorious is the thought of its contagious power; that others will catch the Divine flame, and pass it on to still other souls.

Such, then, is the practical teaching of to-day's

* S. Luke xii. 49.

Third Sunday in Lent.

Epistle. It gives us positive instructions for Christian life, reaching down into the very depths of our nature, and training the two great powers of the soul which act upon the will—the affections and the intellect. Walk in love, the exercise of the affections. Walk in light, the training of the intellect. As dear children, walk in love, walk in light, and your course will always be heavenwards.

IV.

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

GAL. IV. 26.

"Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

IN the Epistle for last Sunday, the Church gave us directions for Christian life—that we should "walk in love as dear children"; that we should "walk as children of light." But children need the care and protection of their parents in order that they may grow up well and safely; and so in to-day's Epistle we are taught that as children of light, as dear children who walk in love, we have not only a Father Which is in heaven, but a mother to whom we may look for a supply of all our needs during the time of our sojourn in this world; and we are instructed in regard to the characteristics of our mother, the Church.

The Epistle for to-day is a very striking example of the mystical or spiritual interpretation of Holy

Scripture. In it S. Paul takes two individuals, Sarah and Hagar, whose story we read in the book of Genesis, and uses them as types of the two covenants, the Jewish and Christian. He then contrasts Mount Sinai, where the Jewish covenant was given to Moses, with Jerusalem, where our Lord taught and died, as representing respectively, the Jewish and the Christian Churches. And, finally, he intimates that as the prophecies and promises connected with Jerusalem, the city of GOD, had not only a temporal but an eternal fulfilment, so in the Christian Church, of which Jerusalem is a type, is there even now a heavenly as well as an earthly character.

I.

"Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." In these words we have four notes of the Christian Church. She is represented under the figure of Jerusalem, which, by interpretation, means the vision of peace, and Jerusalem was also the City of GOD, and the type of heaven.

The Fathers and ancient commentators of the Church have recognized four senses in the interpretation of Holy Scripture—not all present in every

passage, although they have found in "Jerusalem" an instance in which all four senses may be discovered. Holy Scripture may be interpreted (1) according to the letter, or (2) according to the spirit, that is, literally or mystically. We find our Lord and the Apostles, especially S. Paul, frequently using the mystical method in interpreting Holy Scripture. This mystical method has been subdivided into three classes.

(*i.*) Tropological, or moral ; the application of a passage to the soul of man.

(*ii.*) Allegorical, its application to the Church on earth.

(*iii.*) Anagogical, its application to the Church in heaven.

As we have observed, we have in the word Jerusalem an example of all the four senses which may be used in the interpretation of Holy Scripture.

1. For, literally, Jerusalem is a city in Palestine with a history intimately interwoven with the Jewish Church almost from its earliest days, and also with the foundation of the Christian Church.

2. And, mystically, Jerusalem may be regarded in three ways.

(*i.*) Tropologically, Jerusalem in its history repre-

sents the soul of the Christian; for to touch only upon its main outlines, it was won from the Jebusites by David after having resisted the attacks of Judah and Benjamin. It was more often besieged than any city in the world, but again and again protected by GOD from its enemies. From the time of its capture by David to its destruction by Titus, it endured seventeen sieges, twice it was razed to the ground, and on two other occasions its walls were levelled. After being almost destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and left for years in ruins, it was re-built, and at the period of our Lord's life was in its greatest magnificence.

This is surely a type of the Christian soul—won from the power of Satan on the battle-field of Calvary, won after many a struggle from captivity to sin, defended by GOD'S grace in innumerable temptations, besieged again and again by the world, the flesh, and the devil, actually taken by the enemy when it fell into mortal sin, but restored and the fortifications of grace re-built when it repented.

(*ii.*) Allegorically, Jerusalem in its vicissitudes typifies the struggles of the Church militant, here on earth, with its schisms and heresies.

(*iii.*) Anagogically, Jerusalem, the vision of peace,

the City of GOD, the type of heaven, typifies the Church triumphant, that Jerusalem, which is described so wonderfully in the closing chapters of the Revelation of S. John as "coming down from GOD out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." * Jerusalem represents to us to-day the Church militant and triumphant, struggling on earth, yet reigning in heaven.

II.

With this introduction let us turn to the text.† "Jerusalem, which is *above*." In these words we are taught that the Church is heavenly. She exists now in three divisions or states: the Church Militant—here on earth; the Church Expectant—in the intermediate state; the Church triumphant—in heaven itself.

And yet she has a real unity, for she is the one body of Christ; her head, Christ Himself, is in heaven. Her superior members, the Saints, reign with Him there; her lower members, her feet, still walk this earth; and other members are waiting

* Rev. xxi. 2.

† I am indebted to the comments on this text in Cornelius à Lapide for much in this sermon.

in the intermediate state to be made perfect that they may pass into the glories of heaven; but all together make but one body—the Body of Christ. All are inspired by one Spirit—the Holy Ghost. Through every part of the body the one life-blood circulates, and that life-blood is the Holy Ghost, which sanctifies the Church, and knits the different members together in the unity of that one body.

S. Paul speaks of our mother, the Church, as "above," because it is the head, Christ, Who rules the Church, Who "holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." * From Him descend all the gifts and sacramental graces of the Church, and the whole Church is heavenly, even while dwelling upon earth, on account of this oneness with Him. "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together." †

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirt of his garments." ‡ The unction of the Holy Ghost runs down from the head to

* Rev. ii. 1. † Psalm cxxii. 3. ‡ Psalm cxxxiii. 1, 2.

the skirts of the clothing, to the humblest member of Christ's Body, the Church.

And again in her worship, the Church is heavenly, for in the supreme act by which GOD is most honoured and man is most blessed—the offering of the Holy Eucharist—heaven and earth are joined; for then "with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify" GOD'S Holy Name; for then He Who reigns at the right hand of GOD upon the throne of heaven is present under the forms of bread and wine upon our altars.* The Church is heavenly, for her treasure is in heaven, and therefore her heart must be there also. Heaven is her end, and in heaven she will reach her ultimate and eternal perfection.

III.

Jerusalem which is above is *free*. This freedom of the Church is four-fold.

1. She claims *civil* freedom, for while she teaches her members to reverence the powers that be, to render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, to be good citizens of the state, and to obey its laws; yet the Church refuses to acknowledge the juris-

*S. Chrysostom on Hebs. Hom. xiv. 3.

diction of the state in matters which belong to her spiritual jurisdiction.

In matters of doctrine, discipline and worship she is free, because she owes her allegiance to her one King, Christ, and no one can have a divided allegiance. No man can serve two masters with the same allegiance; when a citizen of one country becomes naturalized in another, he has to renounce his allegiance to his former country in professing allegiance to the country of his adoption. And so the Church in spiritual things is free from the civil power, and cannot recognize its interference in those things which belong to her spiritual freedom.

2. The Church is *morally* free; that is, free from the slavery of sin; for the Church is the Body of Christ; and being inspired by the Holy Ghost, is holy, and therefore not in bondage to sin. Individual members may entangle themselves in the snares of evil, parts of the body may even separate themselves by schism; but the Church, as the Church, is the Holy Catholic Church, and as holy claims a moral freedom, and teaches her children that as living members of her body, they, too, must have this moral freedom from sin and its bondage.

3. Again, the Church is *intellectually* free; be-

cause she alone possesses the truth which can make us free. Our Lord said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* The world is in bondage to error. It is always talking about emancipating itself by higher education, by which it means acquaintance with the more or less accurate guesses at the laws which rule the material world, and with the theories of the philosophers of the present day.

It always has been so with the world; but the guesses at the laws which rule the material world, and the theories of philosophers, which each generation has accepted as the last word of science or philosophy, have both been swept away again and again by new discoveries; and since history repeats itself, there is little doubt that the science and philosophy of the present day, which are taught with such arrogant assurance, will give place to the new theories of another generation.

But through all these changes the teachings of the Church have remained the same. The truth which S. Paul taught is the truth which the Church accepts to-day, the truth which is in Jesus Christ, the knowledge of which, as He tells us, makes us free, intellectually free.

* S. John viii. 32.

The Church is the guardian of truth—not of that truth in regard to this material world, which GOD has *not* revealed, but which scientists have guessed at—but of the truth which can make us wise unto salvation; the truth which is eternal.

The Church is the teacher of all morals. What was right in the days of the Apostles is right to-day. What was wrong then the world cannot make right now by its social code or its state law. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" was a commandment given by Christ based upon a moral truth, the sanctity of marriage, which can never change. Society may condone, the state laws may grant, divorce; but the sin remains the same.

The Church alone is free intellectually, for she alone has the infallible teacher, the Holy Ghost, Who shall guide her into all truth.*

4. The Church is free in a *heavenly* sense; that is, she is free-born. She belongs to heaven, to the spirit world; and when a man becomes a member of the Church, he is born anew by the regeneration of baptism; born into the spirit life of the Church. As S. Paul says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; be-

* S. John xvi. 13.

hold, all things are become new." * Here she may be in exile, yet she is free; her conversation is in heaven; her citizenship is there; her head, her heart, her faith, her hope, her love!

IV.

"Jerusalem which is above is free, which is *the mother of us all.*" The mother of *us* all! Not the mother of all persons, but of us all; that is of all the baptized. The Church is the bride of Christ, and therefore she is the mother of His children.

Hence she watches over them with anxious care. As a mother teaches her child to talk, so she teaches her children to speak the language of prayer, to say with their first words, "Our Father Which art in heaven."

She feeds them with her holy Sacraments; she clothes them with the garments of righteousness; she strives to protect them from all danger, to guide their feet into the way of peace. She ministers to her children in all the vicissitudes of their life, not only in their sorrows, but in their joys; in their sickness and in their health.

She supplies each growing need with her sacra-

* 2 Cor. v. 17.

mental gifts—Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Holy Communion. And then for their special needs, in Holy Matrimony she bestows her blessing; in Holy Orders she makes them her priests, and with her Unction she prepares them to meet the last great trial of death.

But if the Church is our mother, and ministers to us in all these ways, surely we owe her something in return, for GOD has said, "Honour thy father and thy mother." The Church teaches us to honour our Father in heaven, and GOD has taught us to honour our mother, the Church. And how shall we honour her? First, by obedience to her precepts, then by loving support and faithful service in her various works.

What a glorious mother is ours! The bride of Christ! How many cares she has endured for Him, for us! How many sorrows she has known! How often the sword has pierced her soul when her children have been unfaithful! Like the widowed mother at Nain following her only son to his grave, has she followed each child who has gone astray, weeping and interceding in her Services for the conversion of all sinners! What a glorious mother! How proud we should be of her! What a glorious

history she has had!—meeting the storms of centuries, resisting the attacks of all her enemies; bearing even with the desertion of her own children, but ever the bride of Christ—our mother!

"Jerusalem which is above." Yes, this has enabled her to endure, that she is one with the Church of heaven, that there her Head, even now, is reigning, there her Lord is king!

This Lent, as we repent of our own sins, let us mourn also for the sins of the Church, and strive to be more faithful members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, more obedient children of His glorious bride, ever striving to realize more and more that our citizenship is in heaven, that "Jerusalem which is above is the mother of us all."

V.

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

HEB. IX. 11-13.

"But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

PASSION Sunday! On which we commemorate the mystery of redemption, the mystery of the precious blood. Salvation! The most joyous word the human tongue can utter, the sweetest music which can entrance the human ear. Salvation! And what does it mean? Only those can tell who realize what sin has done, who realize its effects in their souls—more, what sin is in its own essence, in its intrinsic malice. Salvation! what is it? Only those can know who realize the ruin it has caused in all that is fairest in human nature — more, the outrage it does to Divine love, to GOD Himself.

Salvation! And from whence does it come? The

voices of earth blend with the voices of heaven in proclaiming the answer—the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. For this is the song of heaven—"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by Thy Blood."* And this is the song of earth—"To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved. In Whom we have redemption through His Blood." †

This was the witness of S. John—"The Blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." ‡ This was the plea of S. Peter—"Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things . . . but with the precious Blood of Christ." § This was the gospel of S. Paul—"Justified by His Blood." ‖ This was the prophecy of Zechariah—"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." ¶

The precious Blood of Christ—the sinner's only hope! The precious Blood of Christ—the Saints' eternal song! And this is the Church's theme on Passion Sunday—"Christ, by His own Blood, obtained eternal redemption for us."

* Rev. v. 9. † Eph. i. 6, 7. ‡ 1 S. John i. 7.
§ 1 S. Peter i. 18, 19. ‖ Rom. v. 9. ¶ Zech. xiii. 1.

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

The first four weeks of Lent we have been trying to learn what sin is, what sin does, in our own life. Trying to find out what our sins are, that we may repent of them. The last two weeks in Lent the Church calls us to learn how Jesus saved us from our sins, how we were redeemed by the mystery of the Passion, by the shedding of the precious Blood.

To-day we begin the contemplation of that mystery, which finds its consummation on Good Friday. *Then* shall we kneel before the Cross, and, with hearts filled with love and sorrow, listen to the dying words of our Lord. *Now*, on the threshold of Passion-tide, we may well turn our thoughts to what Revelation tells us of the mystery of redemption—a mystery so profound that we must wait for the revelation of eternity to fathom it—a doctrine so many-sided that we can but study from time to time some aspects of it, which may prepare us hereafter for the full revelation of our Lord's wondrous love.

And so let us now turn our thoughts to the aspect of our Lord's redemption, which is brought before us in to-day's Epistle, the aspect typified by the sacrifices of the Jewish law.

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

I.

The idea of sacrifice in the human heart is almost co-extensive with the idea of GOD, for everywhere, in some form or other, in the most savage races as well as among the most enlightened people, we trace the conception of sacrifice as the most universal element in religious worship. And the universality of the sacrificial idea can only be accounted for either by some primeval revelation from GOD, or by the fact that GOD, Who made man, and endowed him with the religious instinct, implanted in him the notion of sacrifice; so that, like the ideas of right and wrong, good and evil, opportunity and responsibility, sacrifice forms one of the fundamental ideas or truths in the human mind.

While sacrifice is now associated chiefly with the sense of sin, it seems originally to have been the expression of love, of filial duty, of that obedience which the child of GOD loves to render to his heavenly Father. Before the Fall, when man's conscience was unclouded by sin, sacrifice was the expression of love alone. Now that man's heart is stained with guilt, sacrifice is the expression of penitence, and yet still of love, for all true penitence is the utterance of love, telling GOD of sorrow,

not for what the penitent has lost, not for the punishment which he has incurred, but of that sorrow which is the expression of love in the presence of sin.

1. Sacrifice consists of an inward and an outward part, of which, while the inward may be the more important, the outward is absolutely necessary to complete or perfect the sacrifice. Theologians speak of "a true and proper sacrifice," by which they mean (as S. Augustine so well shows),* a sacrifice which has both its inward and outward parts perfect.

True sacrifices are those inward feelings of love and obedience which form the very foundation of religion; but those feelings are not in themselves proper sacrifices; in order that they may become so they must find some external means of expression. A true and proper sacrifice is one in which the religion of the heart is expressed by some outward symbol or rite acceptable to GOD.

In the Jewish sacrifices these two parts had to meet, in order that the sacrifice might be pleasing to GOD. The stern denunciation of the prophets was, to a great extent, provoked by the absence

* S. Augustine, "De Civitate Dei," Lib. x., cap. v. and vi.

of the inward part, as we read in the book of Proverbs, "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination." * And, "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." † And in Isaiah, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord; I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. . . . Bring no more vain oblations . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well." ‡ And in Jeremiah, "Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto Me." § Hence the Psalmist says, "The sacrifices of GOD are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O GOD, Thou wilt not despise." ‖

In our Lord Jesus Christ the inward part was present from the first moment of His incarnate life; for the Epistle to the Hebrews tells that when He came into the world He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O GOD"; ¶ and His whole life on earth was one great act of love, one great act of obla-

* Prov. xxi. 27. † Prov. xxi. 3. ‡ Isa. i. 11-17.
§ Jer. vi. 20. ‖ Psalm li. 17. ¶ Heb. x. 9.

tion, finding its ultimate and perfect expression in the sacrifice of the Cross.

Some people in the present day teach that it was by our Lord's life of obedience alone that the world was redeemed. This is alike contrary to the teaching of Holy Scripture and of the Church.

For Holy Scripture tells us again and again that the world was redeemed by the death of Christ, by the shedding of His precious Blood, not that the outward act of sacrifice would have been sufficient, if we could conceive it, in our Lord's case, as separated from the inward offering of the heart. It was the life of perfect love and unwavering obedience, which, as the inward part, found its outward expression in the death upon the Cross, and made our Lord's offering a true and proper sacrifice; or, as our Prayer Book says, "A full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

And, moreover, we must ever remember that the sacrifice which our Lord offered for the redemption of the world was not only the sacrifice of an absolutely sinless human nature, and a perfectly obedient human will, but a sacrifice offered by a Divine Person, and this it was which gave it its

infinite value. He Who offered it upon the Cross was not only the Son of Man, but the Son of GOD, and the precious Blood gains its eternal and superabundant efficacy from its relation, not only to a sinless human nature, but to a Divine Person, "For GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." * And "We were reconciled to GOD by the death of His Son." †

II.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, from which the Epistle for to-day is taken, our Lord's sacrifice upon the Cross is compared with the sacrifices under the Jewish law; and certain points of resemblance and of difference are noted. Without confining ourselves to the Epistle to the Hebrews, let us observe how perfectly our Lord fulfilled the sacrificial types in the Jewish Church, and then let us notice where our Lord's sacrifice differs, not from the Jewish sacrifices, but from the ritual of the Day of Atonement.

In the Jewish sacrifices we may trace several distinct stages, each of which is fulfilled by our Lord in His offering of Himself on Calvary.

1. There was the presentation of the victim by

* S. John iii. 16. † Rom. v. 10.

the offerer. In the first chapter of Leviticus we read, "If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord." *

Two points here demand our attention. The offering was to be without blemish, and it was to be a voluntary offering. † We are told that our Lord offered Himself without spot (Heb. ix. 14), and the word (ἄμωμος) "without spot" is a distinctly sacrificial term, intimating that the offering had passed the scrutiny of the Momoscopos, and was a proper sacrifice.

Then it was, we know, a voluntary offering, and offered for GOD'S acceptance, and the act of presentation, the bringing of the victim, as it were, to the door of the tabernacle, may be referred either to our Lord's high-priestly prayer in the seventeenth chapter of S. John, or to that prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane by which He dedicated Himself by an act of His will, saying, "Abba, Father, all things

* Lev. i. 3.

† The phrase translated "of his own voluntary will" is also rendered "for his acceptance."

are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt." * Or, we may consider both these actions to belong to the presentation of the victim.

2. The second stage in the offering of the Jewish sacrifice was the identification of the victim with the offerer. We read, "He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." † By this action the Jewish offerer expressed his desire that the offering should be accepted in his place. The victim, however, was only a symbolic substitute for the offerer, but our Lord was in the truest sense representative of the human race. In Christ the gift offered up was His living human flesh, animated by His rational soul, and therefore in the language of Scripture a spiritual and rational offering. Hence the sacrificial offering offered by Christ is not merely a symbolical, but a real and equivalent substitute for mankind, on whose behalf it is sacrificed.

3. Then came the effusion of the blood. The offerer himself slew the victim. The priest took the blood and sprinkled or poured it round about upon

* S. Mark xiv. 26. † Lev. i. 4.

the altar. In the case of the sin offering the priest was to put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense,* and to sprinkle with his finger the blood seven times before the Lord before the veil of the sanctuary.† To this action we must specially direct attention. The blood of each sin offering was sprinkled before or against the veil which separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies and symbolized the separation which sin had caused between GOD and man, and taught that there was, therefore, no free access to GOD. The blood was sprinkled, but the veil remained unmoved.

This stage of the Jewish sacrifice, its culmination, was fulfilled by our Blessed Lord upon the Cross when He died, having shed His precious Blood, and the acceptance of His sacrifice by the eternal Father was signified by the rending of the veil of the temple. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, and so the veil remained unmoved when sprinkled with their blood. The precious Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin, so when it was sprinkled the veil of the temple was rent in twain, signifying that the barrier between GOD and man was removed, and access to

* Lev. iv. 7. † Lev. iv. 6.

GOD was secured through the precious Blood of Christ.

4. The fourth stage in the sacrifice was the burning upon the altar of certain parts of the victim, which thus went up as a sweet savour to GOD. So S. Paul tells us that our Lord gave "Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to GOD for a sweet-smelling savour." *

5. And, lastly, there was a feast upon the sacrifice, and this is fulfilled by our Lord's gift of His holy Body and precious Blood to be our food in the Holy Eucharist. There we feast upon the Christian sacrifice.

III.

Holy Scripture teaches us to associate the idea of life with the blood, and therefore forbade the Jews ever to eat blood. Indeed, the method of slaughtering animals practised by the Jews was for the express purpose of strictly observing this precept, and we read, "I will even set My face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon

* Eph. v. 2.

the altar to make an atonement for your souls." * So that as all sacrifice pointed to our Lord's sacrifice upon the Cross, this particular injunction in regard to the blood pointed to the fact that in our Lord's sacrifice it was the precious Blood which was to make atonement for sin, which was to redeem the world.

How overwhelming is the thought of the whole human race offering sacrifice in their effort to express their need of redemption, their desire to be admitted once more into the kingdom of GOD'S love! Then in Abraham, out of the human race, GOD chooses a peculiar people, and later, through Moses, instructs them in the law of sacrifice; a rite in which the offering of the blood was the essential feature. Think of the blood sprinkled before the veil so many thousand times, as every sin offering was pleaded before GOD!

And then, at last, in the fulness of time the one great sacrifice was offered upon the altar of the Cross, the precious blood was sprinkled towards the veil, and GOD's acceptance signified by that rending of the veil of the temple, of which all the Evangelists make mention.

* Lev. xvii. 10, 11; *cf.* Gen. ix. 4; Deut. xii. 23.

And by this inauguration of the new dispensation, a new and living way is opened to the throne of GOD, opened by the precious Blood. From that Blood each baptism gains its efficacy, from it each absolution derives its power.

The precious Blood of Christ—the means of redemption, applied to our souls through the Sacraments of the Church! And this Passion-tide we are called upon to meditate upon this mystery of our faith. Let us pray the Holy Spirit of GOD to open the eyes of our soul, to enlighten our understanding, that we may enter more into the mystery of the Passion, that we may grasp more fully what we owe to the precious Blood of Christ. Let us sing its praises now in this world of sin, as we shall sing its praises for ever among that white-robed throng in heaven, who have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb, and who will sing for ever the praises of Him Who redeemed them unto GOD by His Blood.

VI.

The Sunday next before Easter.

PHIL. II. 5-8.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of GOD, thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

HESE words are the most sublime, the most important, perhaps, in the writings of S. Paul—indeed, I had almost said in all Scripture. For they reveal to us with singular distinctness the foundation truth of the Christian religion—the Incarnation. They have been, as many of you are aware, the battle-field of controversy in regard to this doctrine, and this controversy has especially challenged our attention of late years.

They tell us Who it was that became incarnate, and what His Incarnation involved. They carry us up to the very heights of His glory as GOD, they

carry us down to the depths of His humiliation as Man; and they propose for our example nothing less than Christ in all His fulness as GOD and Man.

The text is so profound, that to be practical we must confine ourselves to a mere outline of S. Paul's argument, and then to a very brief consideration of its application to ourselves at this solemn season.

I have said that this passage reveals to us Who It was Who became incarnate, and what His Incarnation involved. Let us take the last point first.

I.

The passage has been called the ladder of our Lord's humiliation, since it describes the steps by which He descended to the lowest depths of human need, in His work of redeeming our fallen race. There are clearly three stages or steps indicated by the finite verbs with which the other clauses of the sentence are grouped. These verbs are (1) "He made Himself of no reputation," or, more literally, "He emptied Himself," (2) "He humbled Himself," and (3) "He became obedient unto the death of the Cross." The last verb is not expressed, but is supplied from the previous clause.

1. In regard to the first stage of the ladder, "He

emptied Himself," we find associated with the verb "emptied Himself" two clauses. "He took upon Him the form of a servant," and "He was made in the likeness of man." In order to avoid the mistakes into which some of late have fallen, we must observe very carefully the tenses employed in these verbs. They are all three aorists; "emptied Himself" being the first aorist indicative, and "took upon Him" and "was made" the second aorist participles.

Now two constructions, and two only, are possible here. The action of the participles may take place at the moment of the action of the verb, or it may precede the action of the verb, for the grammar of the Greek language makes it impossible for the action of the participles to occur *after* the action of the verb to which they refer. We may therefore translate "He emptied Himself by taking upon Him the form of a servant, and by becoming man," the participles thus simply explaining the action of the verb; or we may translate "When He had taken upon Himself the form of a servant, and had become man, He emptied Himself. This last, while grammatically allowable, is, however, inconsistent with the sense of the passage, and with

the teaching of the Church. We have, therefore, in this first stage of the ladder a statement that the Incarnation was an "emptying," and this emptying is explained as being equivalent to the taking of the form of a servant and becoming man.

2. The second stage speaks of a further humiliation, that being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself; and this further act of humiliation is explained by another participial clause in the aorist—that He became obedient unto death.

He not only assumed human nature, but accepted the penalty which belonged to fallen nature; a penalty which He accepted of His own free will, since death could have no dominion over Him, for He was the Lord of life: but having assumed human nature, He accepted all its conditions, death included.

3. The third and last stage of the ladder is found in the clause, "He became obedient, even to the death of the Cross." That is, that having chosen to die, of all the modes of death possible, He accepted that which was most painful, most humiliating.

II.

How wonderful is the power and pathos of the story of our Lord's death! That He Who had never

done anything amiss, Whose life had been one long service of His fellow-men, Who had gone the length and breadth of the Holy Land doing works of mercy and love, that He Whose character was so beautiful, Who had loved His fellow-men so dearly, and had done such good in His generation, that He should suffer, and suffer such a cruel death, appeals to our human sympathy with marvellous force.

And yet it is not this upon which S. Paul is insisting; it is not this which constitutes the unique character of our Lord's sacrifice and gives it its infinite value, its superabundant merit. What then is it? S. Paul tells us in the first point of his argument—the point we passed over; it is, that the Sinless Sufferer was not only man, but GOD! The subject of the sentences we have been considering was One, Who being in the form of GOD, thought it not a prize to be snatched at, to be equal with GOD, but emptied Himself. It is this which gives to our Lord's sacrifice its stupendous character.

Let us try and grasp to some extent, at least, from some illustrations (inadequate as they always must be), from our feelings towards our fellow-men, what our Lord has done for us.

Take a refined lady, highly educated, living

for years in affluence, and suddenly, by no fault of her own, plunged into the direst poverty, having to work, for instance, as a seamstress in some sweat-shop to save herself and the children who are so dear to her from absolute starvation. Think of the pain she suffers, the humiliation she has to put up with, the shrinking from her surroundings, the long weary hours of labour, the miserable pittance she is paid—only just enough to keep body and soul together.

How such a case appeals to our sympathy! It is the contrast—between what she had been, what she had known, what she herself still is, and what she now has to put up with—which touches us. Her actual hardship is, probably, precisely the same as that of others who are working with her. They, poor wretches, have grown up in that atmosphere, have never known any other life, they are children of the slums! And yet while both are in precisely the same environment, both doing the same work, and on the same starvation wages, yet we feel that the others do not suffer as the woman of refinement does. They are inured to their surroundings. The wages are poor and the living is hard, and we pity them; but we feel, and rightly

so, that their suffering is entirely different from the suffering of their refined companion.

Now turn again to S. Paul's argument. He tells us that He Who assumed human nature—taking upon Him the form, that is, the essential attributes and character of the slave, and Who, in willing to become obedient to death like other men, accepted death in its most terrible and humiliating aspects—was GOD.

What marvellous condescension! The King Who rules the world becomes subject to the cruelty of His rebellious people! The Creator of all things, without Whom was not anything made that was made, places Himself in the hands of the most worthless of His creatures, and allows them to wreak their will upon Him! It is not only that the just suffers for the unjust; it is not only that the Sufferer Himself is sinless, but He is GOD! Thought reels, as we strive to grasp all that this means, and while we fail, of course, absolutely, in our attempt to fathom it, we see clearly that this it was which gave to our Lord's Passion its unique character, to His sacrifice its infinite value, to His death its superabundant merit.

III.

Such is a brief outline of S. Paul's argument. What is the lesson we are to learn from it? It is summed up in the Collect for to-day, in which we pray that we may follow the example of our Lord's humility, and of His patience. And yet there seems something behind these two glorious virtues—humility and patience—which is in S. Paul's mind even more than these.

It is the spirit, surely, of unselfishness; that our Lord, being what He was—GOD, became Man that He might serve man, and save man. Being GOD, He was Love, for love is the essential attribute of GOD, and love is unselfishness, the sacrifice of self for others. And our Lord's Passion and Death was the supreme act of His love. Aye, and never forget that it owed its power to the fact that He was GOD.

Most of you are probably familiar with the engraving of the famous picture of "The Russian Serf." The painter depicts a sleigh drawn by five horses, racing over a dreary snow-clad plain; close upon the sleigh are the foremost individuals of a pack of wolves, the master in the sleigh has just shot one, while the serf, mounted upon one of the

horses, is urging the panic-stricken steeds to their utmost speed. Connected with the picture is a story.

A master is passing in his sleigh from his estate to a neighbouring town. The sleigh-bells jingled merrily, and the splendid horses drew the light vehicle over the crisp snow, when the horrid sound of the baying of wolves was heard. The horses recognize the sound, and, panic-stricken, are scarcely to be restrained by the driver. They are urged to put forth their best efforts to reach the gates of the town before the pack can run down the sleigh. The wolves gain upon it. As we have said, the master shoots the foremost wolf, and there is a brief halt in the pack while they stop to devour their companion, but soon they have caught up again with the sleigh. A horse is cut loose and dragged down, and then another, each time giving a brief respite, and enabling the sleigh to gain slightly on the wolves. The town is in sight, but the wolves are round the sleigh once more—another horse cannot be spared—the gun is empty! There is but one thing to be done: the serf, pressing the reins into his master's hands, throws himself amongst the wolves. Once more there is a moment's halt

in the pack, and the master drives safely beyond their reach within the walls of the town!

The next day he goes to the place where this splendid deed of loyalty and sacrifice had been performed, and finds the clean picked bones of his faithful slave. He buries them, and over the tomb erects a monument, inscribed with these words: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." * He calls himself not master, but friend.

How often, perhaps, we have read or heard the tale, never without its awakening within us emotions of admiration at the heroism of that self-sacrifice! How often we have applied it, perhaps, as we are applying it now, to our Lord's heroic deed of sacrifice, by which the world was redeemed! But the illustration is not perfect, the analogy is not complete, for in our Lord's death it was not the slave who died for his master, but the Master Who died for the slave! How much more would it awaken our enthusiasm if the story were told, that when the supreme moment was reached, and one or the other must die, the master had laid his hand upon the serf, and said, "You live, and I will

* S. John xv. 13.

die for you." And yet this was what our Lord did on Good Friday. For it was the Lord, not the slave, Who threw Himself among the wolves of sin, to save the life of those who were His creatures. It was GOD Who said to man, "You live, and I will die," "I will die for thee, that thou mayest live." Picture this, and you have an idea of the sacrifice, the unselfishness, the self-sacrificing love of our Lord in His Passion.

IV.

Now we are able to understand the injunction with which S. Paul begins the passage, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." He was not speaking of the mind of Christ generally, although in another place he does say, "I think that I have the mind of Christ"; but here he is speaking of our having *this* mind, this purpose of unselfish love, this interest in the good of others, this willing sacrifice for our fellow-men. And this is certain from the preceding verse, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."*

What did He surrender?—His rights? He was

* Phil. ii. 4.

GOD, but He thought it not a prize to be snatched at to be equal with GOD. He laid aside His prerogatives as GOD, and became man. And we, how often we stand on our rights! How indignant we are if they are not respected! I do not mean that there are not times when we may justly hold our own, but how many times we pass beyond what justice requires, and because our rights are infringed we withhold the helping hand from others.

What did our Lord surrender? Not only His rights, but His liberty. How we prize liberty! We chafe against restraint, against the limitations of circumstances; often against the action of authority which we think interferes with our liberty—the authority of the Church, the authority of the State. But our Lord surrenders His liberty, allows His creatures to bind Him, and lead Him away to die.

And then again, in His sacrifice He chose the hardest way, He chose the death of the Cross, He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. And we, when we realize that a duty must be done, how often we choose the easiest way. We shrink from the path of the hardship; and yet our Lord has told us that the only road to heaven is the narrow way, the only entrance is through the

strait gate, that we must strive to enter in; for few shall be able to do so.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Surely the lesson of Good Friday is the lesson of unselfishness, of love for others, and therefore of self-sacrifice. And as we study it, let us pray not merely that our hearts may be touched by it, but that we may follow, as far as we are able, the example of our Lord's great humility, of His wondrous patience, and, still more, of His self-sacrificing love.

Second Course.

SIX SERMONS ON THE EXAMPLE OF OUR LORD.

SECOND COURSE—JESUS OUR EXAMPLE.

I.

In Temptation.

HEB. IV. 15.

"For we have not an High Priest Which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

HEB. II. 18.

"For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."

IN the Collect for the Second Sunday after Easter we are told that our Blessed Lord was given to us "not only to be a Sacrifice for sin, but also an Ensample of godly life"; that is, we are reminded that we are not to fix our gaze exclusively on the Death of Christ, by which the Atonement for our sin was made; but are also to study the Life of Christ, as the mirror in which we may see reflected what our life ought to be.

During this Lent, therefore, I propose, on Sunday mornings, to take our Blessed Lord as our Example in some of the varying conditions of human life. There is no phase, there is no condition, there is no difficulty in human life in which we may not turn to Him and find some lesson, in which we may not look to Him as our Guide and Example.

I.

We begin to-day with our Lord as our Example in temptation; and I take this subject first for two reasons: one, that the Gospel for to-day gives us the story of our Lord's temptation; the other, because in the word "temptation" is summed up the whole of man's life.

If we ask that question which so often rises in our hearts, Why are we here in this world of trial and sorrow? what is the purpose of this little life which is given us between two great eternities—the life of this world? One of the answers certainly will be, "We are placed here to be tempted."

We are put into this world simply that we may be tempted; but then, you must remember what that word "temptation" means. We have got into the habit of fixing upon it only one of its meanings,

and that a very secondary one. To us temptation always suggests sin, to us temptation and sin sometimes seem almost synonymous; and yet the word itself has no necessary connection with sin. The word "temptation," both in our own language and also in the Greek and Latin, simply means a "trying" of a person, a "testing" of them, a "proving" of them. And so, from one point of view, we may regard life simply as the trial, the testing, the proving of our nature. And in our Blessed Lord we have the great example how temptation is to be met, conquered, or endured, so that it may do its work in preparing us for heaven.

While the word "temptation" has this root meaning—to be proved, to be tested, yet it is used in the Bible in three derivative senses.

1. We speak, for instance, of "temptation to evil," as in the Gospel for to-day, when we are told that "Then was Jesus led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Here we mean seduction to commit sin, to do wrong.

2. Then the word is also used of tempting God; for instance, in Psalm xcv. we read, "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their hearts, for they have

not known My ways: unto whom I sware in My wrath that they should not enter into My rest." And then the same Psalm goes on to tell us *why;* for "your fathers tempted Me, proved Me" in the wilderness. We tempt GOD when we presume upon GOD'S mercy, when we presume upon GOD'S grace, and thus provoke GOD.

3. And, lastly, there is a sense in which GOD tempts us; as, for instance in Genesis xxii. 1, where it says, "GOD did tempt Abraham," when He put him to the proof and told him to offer up Isaac; and in S. John vi. 6, when our Lord asked Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this He said to *prove* him: for He Himself knew what He would do." So that you see that while temptation has this general meaning of proving, it is used in the Bible in three ways: (1) Of Satan seducing us to sin; (2) Of GOD proving us that He may draw out of us virtue, and (3) Of our tempting GOD, provoking Him by our own presumption.

Our Blessed Lord immediately after His Baptism is led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, that He may be tempted of the devil, because temptation begins from the moment of spiritual birth. No sooner are we made "sons of GOD" in Baptism than

Satan comes and strives to prove that we are not GOD'S sons by leading us into sin.

It was so with our Lord; no sooner had that mysterious Voice rung out from the open heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased," than Satan came to our Lord and said, "If Thou *be* the Son of GOD, make these stones bread," "If Thou be the Son of GOD, cast Thyself down." So when the priest in Baptism pours the water upon the child, "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," there rings, as it were, from the realms of heaven, a Voice which says, "This child is My beloved son." And Satan replies, "I will see if he is. I will see if I cannot make him my child, and so rob GOD of one of His children."

As temptation, then, is one of our most common experiences in life, as it is part of our daily life, our Lord begins His Ministry by being tempted, by going apart, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, into the wilderness, that He may be tempted of the devil, and that He may thus become the mirror into which we may look and see what our life should be in all times of temptation, and more, that we may flee to Him for help when tempted.

Hence my text tells us: "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." "For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Our Blessed Lord, then, is our example in temptation. He endured temptation, first, that He might prove and break its force; for by our Blessed Lord's life and death we must ever remember that the power of Satan over man was greatly shattered. Before our Lord died—before the temptation which with Him was lifelong had ended in that cry of victory, "It is finished!"—Satan had enormous power in this world compared with what He has now. Now he comes, just as wise as ever, now he schemes with that marvellous intellect of his, now he turns and twists his arguments just to suit our weakness, our self-love and pride and passion; but his power is limited, and he has no power whatever to compel us. Before our Lord's time he had a strange power even over the bodies of men, for we read of many devil-possessed men whom our Lord cured; but this peculiar form of "possession" seems to have passed away. Our Lord, then, was tempted

first, that He might prove and break the force of the temptation which you and I have to meet.

Again, He was tempted that He might teach us to expect temptation, that He might teach us that the true purpose of life is so to meet temptation that we may win our crown—"Blessed is the man who endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life."

II.

And again He was tempted—and this is of most importance to us—in order to show us how we are to meet our temptations. It is this third thought to which we shall confine our attention this morning; our Lord was tempted, and we learn from the story of His temptation, which forms the Gospel for to-day, one or two great general laws.

1. The first one, and perhaps the most important, is—*Never to parley or argue with temptation*, always to resist it at once and with promptness. The first suggestion of temptation is easy to suppress, but when we argue with it, when we parley—so to speak—with the tempter, then it is that the temptation enters into our very soul and seems to get possession of us, and then we find it hard to resist.

Now our Lord never once, in any of the three temptations, parleyed in the slightest degree with the tempter. He did not argue, He met each with one simple answer, and that answer was the Word of GOD. Every one of our Lord's temptations was met by a text from the book of Deuteronomy; and therefore we learn as our second law, that "*The sword of the Spirit is the Word of* GOD," and that from the scabbard of the Bible we are to draw that "sword of the Spirit" with which to meet each temptation that assails us in life—to say, "I cannot do it, for GOD in His Holy Word has said this shall not be done."

If we pass from general laws to particular ones, we observe in my text that our High Priest "was tempted in *all* points like as we are"—in all respects; that is, in every part of His nature. The temptation was threefold because human nature is threefold—body, soul and spirit.

2. Our Blessed Lord's first temptation is the temptation of the *flesh*. It almost always comes first; it comes first in the order of life. A child is little better at first than an animal, and most of its temptations come through its animal nature; the desire to gratify simple—not particularly sinful—

appetites; the desire to do just what is pleasant. So with the majority of people, through their bodies at first most of their temptations come. The body is the instrument, in Satan's hands, of a very large proportion of our temptations.

It is quite likely that at first you would dispute this statement. You would say, for instance, "My temptations are largely wandering thoughts in prayer, or getting my prayers crowded out of my life. I miss my morning prayers, or say them in a hurry continually. Now, is not this a spiritual temptation? What has it to do with the body?" Why do you miss your morning prayers? why have you wandering thoughts? You miss your morning prayers because you are too lazy to get up in time to say them; and that is a bodily temptation, the sin of Sloth. And your wandering thoughts in prayer half the time are because your body is tired, or because it craves for indulgence; it is not always so, but that is often the root of the temptation. Where the body is disciplined the mind can be controlled; where the body is undisciplined the mind, as a rule, is undisciplined too.

Our Blessed Lord, then, generally under this first temptation, teaches us the importance of self-discipline, and to reach self-discipline the necessity

of a step beyond it—Self-denial. We all of us agree, I imagine, in theory at least, about the importance of self-discipline in regard to our bodies; but we do not all of us realize, perhaps, that in order to reach self-discipline we must go a step beyond and practise self-denial. This is the purpose of Lent. What is the value of the self-denial to which the Church calls us in Lent? It is that going a step beyond self-discipline we may be able by self-denial so to subdue the body that after Lent we may be able to keep it in a state of self-discipline.

Our Lord, therefore, laid down as one of the conditions, without which no one could be His disciple, that we must take up our cross and deny ourselves, take up our cross *daily** and deny ourselves if we are to follow Him. The first broad law about temptation of the body which we learn from our Master's temptation is, that self-discipline is not enough, that to gain it we must go beyond self-discipline to self-denial. This our Lord teaches us by fasting forty days and forty nights in the wilderness.

3. Then our Lord, in His first temptation, teaches us another great principle: that the end never justifies the means; that it is never right to use unlawful

* S. Luke ix. 23.

means; in a word, that it is never right to do wrong. Now I imagine you would all at once say, "Why that is the very bulwark of our religion. The Jesuits are said to teach (or to have taught in the past) that the end does justify the means; but we never thought so. No, we are not courageous enough to put forth such an extremely immoral proposition; but alas, we are blind enough to practise it. We want to reach an end, and we are continually overlooking the wrongness of the means."

In our struggles to get on in the world, to make a success of life, how unscrupulous people are about the means they use! In our desire to make a success in society, how careless about the means! To seem agreeable is the end, to be attractive is the end, to win people is the end—perhaps a good enough end. But the means, alas, is to exaggerate, to pay all sorts of empty compliments which are at the bottom lies, for we do not mean them, and we know they are false, but they are the means by which we attain our end. When, therefore, we condemn others and talk about the immorality of the end justifying the means, let us look into our own lives, and I venture to think there are few of us in this Church who, if our conscience be awakened, will not have to confess that we

have again and again used means which are all wrong to gain ends which are perhaps not entirely right.

This our Lord teaches us in His first temptation, because Satan then, in tempting Him to make the stones bread, perhaps used some such arguments as these, "You are starving; you have been forty days without food; your Father in heaven is neglecting you, He is treating you very hardly; nay, more, you are dying of hunger, you cannot live much longer without food. Now, surely you have a right to help yourself, do not wait for GOD any longer; turn these stones into bread; that is, use unlawful means, work a miracle for your own relief, use your Divine power to help your human nature."

Translated into the language of common life, and applied to ourselves, it would perhaps be this: You are very poor, you cannot get on in life, you are almost starving, your children are suffering; you cannot go on like this, be dishonest—other people are. Honesty does not pay in the world now. If you will, turn the stones into bread; you can easily do it by simply—not stealing, but—adopting the world's questionable methods of getting on. The end surely good—to get on, to keep your family in comfort; the means is bad, it is bad to be dishonest.

4. Then again, our Blessed Lord, in this temptation, shows us the great importance of resisting temptation in small things. Most people would start back in horror if they were tempted to commit some great act, for instance, of dishonesty; or of telling, say, a deliberate lie; while they are not greatly alarmed by some trifling trick of trade which is dishonest, or some society phrase which is untrue. That is to say, they do not think much of small temptations, although they would be very much alarmed by large ones. Our Lord teaches us that we are to resist the first temptation, however small it is.

Now see how small was Satan's first temptation compared with his last. His first temptation was a piece of bread to a hungry man; his last temptation was the offer of all the kingdoms of the world! Our Lord teaches us that if we are willing to take the piece of bread dishonestly, we are likely to go on to worse things; but that if we have the courage to resist the small temptation—the piece of bread—we shall have the strength to resist the offer of greater things, even of all the kingdoms of the world.

Satan comes like some avaricious merchant, determined to get what he wants, but determined to get it

as cheaply as he possibly can. What does he want to buy? He wants, my brother, to buy your soul, and he wants to get it cheap if he can, for Satan is a capital huckster for souls. He comes and he offers you a piece of bread. If you yield to a small temptation he is quite satisfied; if you will not, he will offer you more and more until (speaking, of course, rhetorically) he offers you a kingdom. He will have you at any price, but he will get you cheap if he can.

Resist, now, the small temptations, and you will probably have grace to resist the large ones; but if once you get into the habit of accepting the world's code of morality about small things, before you know it, you will probably have accepted the devil's code of morality about great ones!

5. And then, lastly, under this head, comes the great law, *to trust* GOD *always*, to trust GOD in spite of appearances, to trust GOD against everything. Our Lord was starving; Satan came and suggested, "GOD has deserted you, now help yourself"; but our Lord showed no sign of distrust. By the passage of Scripture He quoted, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of GOD," He showed that the needs of the body were not everything;

that the soul was of greater importance, and that its salvation depended upon GOD and therefore that we must trust GOD.

So upon the Cross, when our Lord cried, "My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He still said *My* GOD, still trusted GOD, for He said just after, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." Satan comes and says, "See, GOD has forsaken you, everything is going against you, do not trust GOD any longer, go to work and help yourself." Our Lord shows in the first temptation, when He refuses to help Himself unlawfully, that we are to trust GOD even though He seems to have forsaken us; that the spirit of our life should be—"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

III.

If we pass from the temptations which assail the flesh to those which attack the spiritual part of our nature, we find them illustrated in our Lord's second temptation. Satan had come to our Blessed Lord and said, "Do not trust GOD any more, He has deserted you." And our Lord practically replied, "Though He slay Me, yet will I trust Him." Satan comes again, and he says, "You were quite

right to trust God; it is a wonderful thing to trust God, it requires splendid courage, it is a mark of great love, you cannot trust God too much; now cast yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple and show how much you trust God."

1. Pride! spiritual pride; tempting God by presumption—in how many ways we do it! We do it when we go into occasions of temptation thinking we shall be strong enough to resist them; when we will not give up a bad companion whom we know is leading us wrong, because we think we shall be strong enough to resist his seductions. Remember, next to the sins of the flesh, sometimes even before them, the universal sin of human nature is Pride. How subtle it is in its character! It will, as it were, feed upon almost anything. One person is proud of his personal beauty, and another of his ugliness, his homeliness.

There is nothing that people will not take, that the devil will not make, as it were, the rallying-point of pride. You look out upon the clear heavens on some bright day, and there is not a cloud; and then suddenly in the middle of the day the rain begins to fall—not a great deal, not a storm, just a shower. You look up, there are no clouds. Where did it

come from? The scientist tells you the atmosphere was charged with moisture, and it only wanted something cold to cause it to condense and come down in the form of rain—it only needed some cold current to bring down that rain. There will not be much rain unless there are clouds, but it often happens in the summer, when the atmosphere is charged with moisture, that it suddenly begins to rain, and yet there is not a cloud.

And in the same way your nature is charged with pride everywhere, just as the atmosphere is with moisture, and the least thing is enough for it to collect around, and it manifests itself at the slightest temptation. Our Blessed Lord shows us that pride is tempting GOD, for when Satan tells Him to cast Himself down from the temple, quoting Scripture and reminding Him that GOD will give His Angels charge over Him, our Lord's reply is simply this: "Thou shalt not *tempt* the Lord thy GOD." Pride is tempting GOD. And then later on in His ministry our Lord said not only "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily," but He said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children"—that is, become humble—"ye cannot

enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Our Lord makes humility one of the conditions of winning Heaven.

2. But Satan has not power to cast us down even in pride, he can only suggest to us to cast ourselves down. Satan does not come to our Blessed Lord upon the pinnacle of the temple and push Him off; he only comes and says, "Throw yourself down." And therefore, though our nature be charged with pride, yet our will can control it. We cannot be cast down unless by an act of our will we will to cast ourselves down. We learn this as one of the great laws in regard to pride.

And spiritual pride—remember that this is the great danger of Lent. As the first temptation of Lent is not to fast, to give way to the desires of the flesh, to be luxurious, to be comfortable; so when we have conquered this and begun to fast, then the second temptation will be to be proud of what we are doing in Lent—proud that we are keeping Lent more strictly than others, and thus all that we are doing is spoiled by pride.

IV.

And then to pass to the last temptation—the temptation of the soul. The temptation of the

moral nature, through the world, through society, through our fellow-men. Just as the lower part of our nature, the body, is tempted through its passions, and the higher part of our nature, the mind, the spirit, is tempted through intellectual sin, so the soul, strictly speaking, is generally tempted through the instrumentality of the world around us, the world which is made up of our fellow-men, the world of society with its glitter and excitement. We must now pass very briefly over this.

1. Satan showed our Lord from the mountain "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," and offered to give them to Him if He would fall down and worship him. Satan showed the *glory* of the world, but Satan did not show the *emptiness* of the world, the unreality of that glory. He shows us the glory of the world, and he strives to induce us to spend the best part of our lives striving to clasp that glory in our embrace.

Just as some little child may wish to seize upon the iridescent soap-bubble which its father has blown for its amusement. The child reaches for the brilliant, shining glory of the bubble, and grasps it, and it collapses. So is it with the glory of the world. The one unwavering testimony, not merely

of the Church, not merely of God's Saints, but of everyone who has lived for the world's glory, is, that when they have got it in their grasp, they find it empty. Satan shows the glory of earth, and not the glory of heaven.

And more, just as the glorious iridescence of that soap bubble is simply the brilliant colours in certain rays of the sunlight which fall upon it and which it reflects, so the glories of earth, so far as they are real, are the reflection of God's glory. To live for the glory of earth is to snatch at the reflection and to forfeit the reality. It is like the dog who, seeing the piece of meat reflected in the brook, dropped the piece in his mouth to snatch at the reflection. Live then for the glory of God, and realize that all that is beautiful on earth is simply the reflection of that glory. Cling to the reality, and hold your hand back from the shadow. Be not like children chasing the shining bubbles of the world's glory, but like men holding on to what is real.

2. The temptation of worldliness is to induce man to fall down and worship Satan, who is the prince of this world; and in this temptation we learn that, reduced to its ultimate law, the temptation of worldliness is always idolatry—it is always to fall

down and worship the world or its prince. The great type of this in the Old Testament was when Nebuchadnezzar set up the golden image in the plains of Dura, and called on everyone to worship it. The image of gold—money, or money's worth! money, or what money will buy—position, popularity, power; but always something—an image, an idol—to be worshipped.

And our Lord teaches us here detachment from the world, to hold back from its offers; our Lord passes over the offer that Satan made of all the kingdoms of the world, and points out the wrongness of the means, the condition—to worship Satan—saying, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy GOD, and Him only shalt thou serve." Here, as in the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord contrasts the two services, of the world and of GOD, and says, You cannot serve two masters, GOD and mammon, GOD and the world, and tells you that you must serve GOD only.

3. And then the devil left Him—left Him, S. Luke says, "for a season." For he came back again and again to tempt Him, until at last in the final struggle he met Him on the hill of Calvary. So we learn that temptation does not always lead to conquest,

only to successful defence, to driving Satan back. He will come again; but having "put on the whole armour of God," as S. Paul says,* we must be content if "in the evil day, having done all," we are able only "to stand," just to hold our own. We must keep ourselves detached from the world, and we must remember that we are put into this world to be tempted in all points, in body, in soul, in spirit, in order that we may be prepared for that crown which the Bible tells us is given to "the man that endureth temptation," to him who wins the victory.

* Eph. vi. 13.

II.

In Prayer.

S. Luke xi. 1.

"Lord, teach us to pray."

THE thought I desire to bring before you this Lent is, that we are to look, not only upon our Lord's Death for our sake, but upon His life—that life which has been eloquently described as "the life of our life"; that Mirror in which we are to see, not what we are, alas! but what we ought to strive to be. We began last Sunday by considering our Lord as our Example in Temptation, partly because that was the subject of the Gospel for the day, but also because temptation is such a universal experience in the life of every one of us.

And now to-day we pass to the contemplation of our Blessed Lord as our Example in Prayer—since prayer comes next to temptation in its universality,

and is the chief weapon with which we are to meet it. If temptation is always round us, if we are liable at any moment and in every condition and circumstance to be assaulted by the tempter; so, on the other hand, are we able almost with every inspiration of breath to pray, for what is prayer but the breathing of the spiritual man? For as the natural man cannot continue to live if he ceases to breathe, so neither can the spiritual life retain its power if we cease to pray. Prayer is the very breath of the soul; and, therefore, prayer ought to be continuous—without ceasing.

Prayer is the exercise of hope—hope which has been described as the source and spring of all human action. There is scarcely any action of our natural life which cannot be traced back to hope as its spring, that is, we always act with some purpose in view, which we *hope* to be able to attain, and without hope action is paralysed. The same may be said of the supernatural virtue of hope. But hope cannot be strong in us unless we are continually praying; it is the spring of all spiritual effort and without it progress is impossible. If we have not the supernatural virtue of hope it is but little use for us to have faith. We may be most orthodox in what

we believe, but if we do not hope for those things in which we believe, we shall never attain either to love them or to make great efforts to gain them.

But not only is prayer the exercise of the supernatural virtue of hope, it is also the means by which we strengthen and develop the link which binds the human soul, with all its needs, to its Heavenly Father, with all His Almighty power; and the more we pray the more conscious we are of receiving from GOD grace to meet each need in life.

Now when we turn to our Blessed Lord, we find that He not only taught His disciples to pray, when they asked, in the words of my text, "Lord, teach us to pray"; but as in almost everything else, He taught them not only in word but also by example. We look upon our Lord's life, and we see that it was a life of prayer. Although it was a life of very hard work, with tremendous claims always pressing upon Him, and immense and eternal results depending upon His accomplishment of the work which He had to do; yet He never allowed work to crowd out prayer. Prayer seems in His Life to have been indeed the continual exercise of His fellowship with His Father.

I.

I propose to-day that we should take briefly some of our own difficulties in prayer, and strive to learn from our Blessed Lord's life how we should meet them. When I utter the word "prayer" I suppose that the thought in the mind of most people is of those two occasions in the day which every Christian consecrates to prayer—I mean the early morning when you rise from sleep, and the night when you retire to rest; or, in common everyday language, what we call our morning and our evening prayers.

1. Did our Lord say morning and evening prayers? *We* find, do we not, so many excuses for making them very imperfect; in the morning we are so late in rising that they have to be reduced to a very few minutes, and hurried over then, in order that we may get to the work of the day. Our morning prayers are so often crowded out by the fact that through sloth—that is, through indulging in the desire of the flesh for more ease—we rise too late to say them. How did our Lord do under those circumstances? His life was a very busy one; His days were very full of work—so full that sometimes we wonder how He could ever have got through it all.

Let me take but one example. We read in S. Mark,* "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." A day it was, I suppose, when He knew that He would have to begin work early, and so He rose before dawn, and departed into a solitary place where He could be alone with God, and there He prayed. Then too, perhaps, He desired to be alone, and, surrounded by His disciples, had no opportunity for *private* prayer.

Some people who have not a room to themselves make this an excuse for omitting their prayers, but our Lord sets them an example by going out to the desert place to pray. Do you say, "But where can I go to pray?" You can always come into this Church—from six o'clock in the morning it is open. On your way to work, in this or some other Church, you can stop and say your prayers, if you cannot do it at home. And remember that our Lord shows us that the press of work, or work begun very early, is no excuse for the neglect of prayer. "He rose before it was day, and went into a solitary place, and there prayed."

2. And then again at night time, how often we

* S. Mark i. 35.

excuse ourselves for very hurried poor prayers because we are so tired! We have given all our strength to the world and its work, and now we cannot get even a few minutes for prayer without sleepiness and wandering thoughts. How did our Lord manage on those occasions? Again I take but one instance—that very, very busy day in which He had fed the five thousand in the wilderness. In the morning "the seventy" had returned from their mission, all thoroughly tired out; and our Lord had said to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." * And they took a boat and crossed over to the other side of the lake, but they were followed, perhaps by the caravan of pilgrims (which they met) going up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover; and though they had gone into the desert place to seek that rest which they needed so much, our Lord at once went on with His work—preached to them, taught them, and when evening was come and they had nothing to eat, He did not send them away fasting, but multiplied the five loaves and two fishes to feed them. Think of the mere labour of distributing food among five thousand men, and that is not counting the women and children—the number,

* S. Mark vi 31.

altogether, must have been ten or fifteen thousand at the very least.

And then when night came on, surely that was an occasion when one's night prayers might have been excused! a day spent in working for others, a day spent in unselfish toil. But no; our Lord went back to the mountain alone and spent almost the whole night in prayer. He dismissed His Apostles, and they crossed the lake; but it was not until the "fourth watch of the night" that He came to them walking upon the waves, that is, between three and six o'clock in the morning. Tired, weary as He was with His toil, He did not allow it to interfere with His customary night prayers.

II.

And then in the many difficulties of our life, in those various exigencies, which arise so continually, when decisions have to be made, or sorrows have to be borne, or trials have to be faced, our Lord shows us that He always met them in the power of prayer.

1. For instance, we often have to make a great decision, and we worry ourselves as to which is the best thing to do; we think it over and over and over again in the power of our own small reason and

experience, until sometimes we reach such a condition of perplexity that we are quite incapable of making any calm decision. What did our Lord do? When the time came for Him to make that great decision, the choice of His Twelve Apostles—that decision upon which the welfare of the Christian Church depended—when the day came for Him to choose the twelve foundation stones on which was to rest for ever the temple of the heavenly Jerusalem —what did He do? We are told most clearly that, "It came to pass in those days, that He went into a mountain to pray, and continued all the night in prayer to GOD," * and the next morning He called to Him the twelve Apostles.

If you were to pray more in making your decisions, if you were to remember that verse in Psalm xxxii., that promise of GOD, "I will guide thee with Mine Eye," and go into GOD's Presence and let that Eye which rests upon you guide you to your decisions, if you were to make your decisions in the power of prayer, they would be wiser decisions, calmer decisions, decisions which you would have less hesitation in carrying out.

2. And then we have not only decisions to make

* S. Luke vi. 12.

in life, but we have, alas! in this vale of tears, great sorrows to bear. Our Lord had many sorrows. Let us consider but one. Among those whom He especially loved was His own cousin after the flesh, S. John Baptist. They had probably grown up together as children, and S. John had been our Lord's great forerunner and His most courageous herald. And for witnessing to moral truth S. John Baptist had been cast into prison by a wicked king; and finally, to gratify the hatred of Herodias and her mother, John the Baptist had been beheaded. They brought the news to our Lord. What a sorrow! And we are told that "when Jesus heard of it, He departed thence by ship into a desert place apart,"* He went apart to spend the time in prayer.

When you have sorrows to bear, do not merely seek some sympathetic ear of an earthly friend into which to pour them, but remember there is no ear so ready, no heart which beats with such sympathy for you as the Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ. Go apart and pray in your sorrow, tell Him all your grief, and let Him wipe away the tears from your eyes; for He has said, "Come unto Me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."†

* S. Matt. xiv. 13. † S. Matt. xi. 28.

3. But in addition to decisions and to sorrows one has often to face in life terrible trials. Sometimes one is able to see the storm approaching. Just as the mariner, by the fall of the mercury and the banking of the clouds to windward, knows that soon his ship will be tossed in the hurricane, so we, as we look out in life, sometimes see approaching, great trials, great storms of difficulty, and, may be, of temptation, which threaten to overwhelm us. How shall we prepare to meet them? First, perhaps, they strike fear into our hearts, and seem almost to paralyse our power of action. What shall we do? Go, pray, and on your knees in the Presence of GOD face them.

When was there ever a trial like that of Gethsemane, when all the sorrow and all the sin of the world was laid upon our Blessed Lord, and the death—the cruel death of the Cross—the next day was staring Him in the face? And He went to the Mount of Olives, and there in prayer and in agony He took up those sins and weighed their guilt, and by an act of His will accepted them, and offered Himself to make atonement, to do penance for them. Where was there sorrow like that?—a sorrow which had such an effect upon our Blessed Lord's Sacred

Body that it caused the Blood to burst throu the pores of the skin and to drop to the gro "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow which is done unto Me!"* He took His sorrow, He took His trial, the tremendous storm of the Passion, when He had to face, to conquer, all the powers of darkness raging around Calvary—He took it to God in prayer. He knelt upon the ground and prayed, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will but as Thou wilt."† See Him bowed like some feeble reed to the ground in the agony of His sorrow in Gethsemane! And then, when it was over, when the prayer was finished, when the mighty act of oblation in will had been made—then see Him rise with new strength, calm and self-controlled, going to meet the traitor, enduring His Passion without one sign of fear, without that splendid courage once failing!

How different is His demeanour kneeling upon the ground in Gethsemane, when the storm was only threatening, and hanging upon the Cross of Calvary, when it had burst with its utmost fury upon Him! What was it that gave Him the power to meet His Passion with that glorious, that magnificent courage?

* Lam. i. 12. † S. Matt. xxvi. 30.

was that He had fought the battle out upon His s in prayer. Our Lord in Gethsemane teaches us the power of prayer to prepare us to meet a storm, to give us strength to bear up against its utmost violence.

4. And then, lastly, in the hour of death. We have seen Jesus in the moment when decision had to be made, in the hour when sorrow came, in the time when trial and terrible misfortune threatened Him; now see Him at last in the hour of death. On the hard death-bed of the Cross, His Hands nailed there—what is He doing? Listen! still He is praying: "Father, forgive them! for they know not what they do." "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" "Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit."

In the hour of death, prayer must be our refuge; but alas! if we have not been in the habit of praying during life, we shall find it most difficult to pray then. It is a common fallacy that everyone can pray at the time of death, but I can assure you it is a fallacy; for those who have not learned the habit of prayer in life, cannot have the power of prayer then. How often have I heard it said to me, "Pray for me, for I cannot pray."

Acquire habits of prayer now, learn how to pray, learn by heart forms of devotion, especially the Psalms, in order that in the hour of death you may follow the Example of Jesus in prayer.

III.

We have now seen how, in all the principal vicissitudes of life, our Lord is our Example in prayer. Let us conclude by glancing for a few moments at our Lord's *method* of prayer. Everyone talks about prayer, but people have such a vague idea of what prayer is. With some it means merely the utterance of a certain formula of words, with about as much feeling, about as much realization of what the words mean, as if they were a mathematical formula. We say so often, when we are told to pray earnestly, to pray fervently, "I cannot, my thoughts wander. I find prayer such a terrible struggle; it is not easy for me to pray." And people have an idea that prayer ought to be so easy. My dear brethren, prayer is not easy. There are times when one can pray with ease, but there are times when the heavens seem to be leaden to us, and we ourselves tongue-tied; and this is no mark of sin—on the contrary, it is simply, it is generally, the sign that God is trying

one of His own children. We are permitted in one instance to gaze upon our Lord in the very act of prayer—in Gethsemane. Very briefly let us notice His method there.

1. First we are told that He knelt down and prayed. He knelt down upon the cold hard ground. His only *Prie-dieu* was the gnarled roots of some olive tree in the Garden of Olives. He teaches us, then, so far as posture, so far as the attitude, so far as the bodily act of prayer is concerned, to beware of laziness. People who kneel upon a soft cushion, and rest their arms upon a beautiful velvet-cushioned *Prie-dieu*, are not likely to pray well. Such should think of our Lord's *Prie-dieu* in Gethsemane.

2. Then we are told next that He was in an agony, and the word "agony" means struggle. The struggle was to pray with all those sorrows pressing on Him, the sins of the world passing before His mind's eye in horrid procession, and the horrors of Calvary the next day before Him. It was not easy to pray; His mind might well be distracted by all that He had to bear. But he "agonized" Himself to pray, He struggled—struggled so that the physical result was the Bloody Sweat.

And you think when you have to struggle in

order to pray that it is a good reason for giving it up! "I cannot pray to-night, I am so sleepy." So the Apostles slumbered and slept, while Jesus prayed. "I cannot pray to-day, I cannot make my meditation; my mind is so distracted with the work I have to do, or by some news I have just heard." Jesus was in an agony; and when He was in an agony, what did He do? We are told that He "prayed more *earnestly*," more earnestly because it was so difficult. The word translated "earnestly" is "intensely"—ἐκτενέστερον, the word from which we get our word "intense." He prayed then with every faculty strained, with the intensest spiritual and physical tension.

Here is a lesson for you—the harder it is to pray, the more your thoughts are prone to wander, the more the claims of the world and its busy schemes of work are pressing upon your mind; the greater, the more intense the struggle, so much the more earnestly must you say, "I *will* pray."

3. And then in His prayer our Lord repeated the same words again and again: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." So we learn that it is of little importance that our prayers should be lengthy or eloquent; we can say the same simple prayer

over and over again, so long as it be earnest. And lastly, He prayed with resignation—"If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Resignation to God's Will is an absolute necessity in all real prayer.

4. And what was the result? The result of that prayer in Gethsemane was courage and strength to face the horrors of the Passion—first, in the palace of Caiaphas, where He was buffeted and spit on by servants; then in the barrack-yard of Pilate, where He was scourged and crowned with thorns, and mocked by the soldiers; then along the Via Dolorosa, where He fell under the weight of His Cross; then on Calvary, where He was lifted up between earth and heaven, where He offered Himself a Sacrifice for you and for me, and for all the world.

He willed to prepare for the Passion by the prayer in Gethsemane, and thus He teaches us to meet our difficulties in the power of prayer. When tempted to neglect prayer, think of our Lord in Gethsemane, and say, "Dear Lord, by Thine Agony and Bloody Sweat, by Thy Cross and Passion, help me to pray: give me, dear Lord, this Lent, the gift of prayer; make me a man of prayer."

And what is a man of prayer like? A man of prayer is like some great mountain in the Alps. We see its gigantic base, so immovable, the puny forces around it dash themselves against it in vain. The storms gather, but they make no impression upon its rocky base. Our gaze runs up the mountain side until we find—what? that the peak is lost in the clouds; we cannot see it. The eye goes up the mountain as far as it can reach, and then the clouds hide from us the mountain top, the peak.

So with the man of prayer: his heart is in the clouds, out of reach of the world, while his feet, stedfast, stand upon the earth. Temptation assails the lower parts of his nature—but he is immovable. Why? Because the eyes of the soul above the clouds of earth are fixed on the glorious vision of heaven. Prayer is the link which joins man to GOD. The man of prayer is immovable amid the storms and temptations of earth, because his soul above the clouds of earth is lost in the contemplation of GOD.

III.

In Work.

S. John ix. 4.

"I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work."

WE have considered our Blessed Lord's life as our great Example, first in Temptation, and then in Prayer. To-day we turn to Him, that from Him we may learn the law of labour, that from His example we may learn some principles in regard to that Work, which forms so large a part of our life in this world.

I.

In studying our Lord's life we cannot but be struck with the fact that it was a life of work; that He Who came into this world, not only to redeem us, but to be our Example, recognizes both in word and deed the duty of labour. "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work."

1. The first lesson these words teach us is, surely, the *dignity* of labour. Some think of work as the result, the penance of sin, and therefore, while necessary, yet as belonging only to our fallen state, and as clouded by the shadow of sin.

Yet we know that before the Fall Adam worked; for we are told that he was put into the Garden of Eden "to dress it and to keep it."* Labour then was full of joy; for the earth responded generously to man's toil; now, as the result of sin, much of our work is unproductive, our best efforts often end in failure; yet even now every good workman knows the joy of seeing the successful result of his labours.

What, however, enables us to grasp the true dignity of labour is our Lord's words—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."† Work, then, belongs not only to our fallen state, not only to man in his state of innocency, but even to the life of GOD.

And throughout His life our Lord teaches us the dignity of work by His example. Yes, in the Carpenter's shop at Nazareth—in the humble labour of helping His foster-father, S. Joseph, as well as during the three and a half years of missionary work, which ended in the Redemption of mankind, and

* Gen. ii. 15. † S. John v. 17.

which laid the foundations for the conversion of the world and the building of the City of GOD in eternity —our Blessed Lord, rising early and late taking rest, and eating the bread of carefulness, is our example in work.

And then, too, of the world to come—there are people who seem to think that, as work is only the result of sin, heaven will be a sort of kingdom of idleness, but they forget that it is not *work* which is the result of sin, but the *difficulties* of work, the failure so often of work; they forget, too, that idleness is simply our nature rejoicing in its own incapacity, delighting in its own sloth, and that, as the Collect for the feast of S. Michael and All Angels reminds us, in heaven the holy Angels always do GOD'S service. Work then, we learn from our Lord, is not only a painful necessity, it is a glorious duty, endowed with special dignity as belonging to the life of GOD Himself in heaven, and set forth in the life of the Son of GOD on earth.

2. Then following close upon this first thought, and indeed flowing from it, is another—the difficulties of work in our life on earth. This indeed is the result of sin. Before the Fall Adam worked in Eden, and the teeming earth joyfully responded to

his toil, and gratefully rendered him her abundant fruits. Then every work produced its full results, then no work of man was a failure. But the penance of Adam's sin was that the earth should bring forth thorns and thistles, and now, as we work, the thorns tear our flesh, and the thistles tell of the bitterness and unproductiveness of much of our labour.

Our Lord teaches us not only that work now is difficult, but that the difficulties must be met, the cross must be borne; for our Lord knew what it was to work and to see no fruit of His labour. The contrast to the Garden of Eden is the Garden of Gethsemane, where the most bitter sorrow of the second Adam was to look out into the future and to see the failure of so much of His toil and sacrifice in the souls of those who would hear of all His love for them, of all His work for them; but who would pass Him by, would reject His offered salvation, would make the price of the precious Blood for them of no avail.

Our Lord in His work knew the thorns of sin, they sprang up with the "Good Seed," and gradually entwined themselves into the Crown with which He was crowned in His Passion; but He teaches us that penance is *remedial*, and that in

meeting the difficulties of labour, and bearing them in the spirit of penitence, work has a new blessing, for it develops in us powers which have been blunted or dwarfed by sin, and that the crown of thorns on earth is the preparation for, and pledge of, the crown of glory in heaven.

3. To take only one more lesson in regard to work from our Lord's life—the importance of preparation, or the relation between preparation and the result of labour.

Our Lord's ministerial work extended over barely three years and a half, and what were its results? We cannot tell, we hardly dare to estimate them, and yet with our defective knowledge we see that His work has transformed the world; but how small this is compared with those greater results in the world beyond in the salvation of the myriads of souls who have accepted His proffered grace. If, however, we confine ourselves to the results of our Lord's work, which we can to some extent estimate, we may surely say that wherever the preaching of the Cross of Christ has reached, in every nation and clime, we see the results of these three and a half years' work.

And yet how disproportionate the time of our

Lord's ministerial work seems when compared with the thirty years' preparation for it at Nazareth. For thirty years in quiet and solitude, with His great mission, the redemption of the world, ever before Him, our Lord held Himself back, training first a perfect human soul; for His hour had not yet come. But when it came, three years and a half of work changed the world. So our Lord teaches us a third lesson in the importance of preparation for our work. The weapon must be fashioned and sharpened, the workman must be trained, and then how rapidly his work is done!

The history of the world, whether secular or ecclesiastical, is full of examples of this—indeed we may say that nearly all great work, work, that is, which has lasted on in its results, which has changed the world's course and left its impress on human life, has been, as a general rule, accomplished by men who have been prepared for it by years of toil and waiting. To take but one example—Moses was eighty years of age before he began his life's work, and had been specially trained for it by forty years of solitude and waiting in the deserts of Horeb.

II.

And now to apply some lessons of our Lord's life to our own work.

1. We learn from our last point the need of *discipline* as a preparation for all effective work—the instrument needs to be prepared, the tool to be sharpened; and when the instrument has been rendered perfect, the tool keen, every touch works wonders. We are GOD'S tools, and we must accept with loving patience the discipline of waiting as the means by which GOD is preparing us for the work in store for us.

2. Another lesson, scarcely less important—the need of *thoroughness* in our work. There has certainly never been such an age of hurry as the age in which we live; but hurry is the enemy of all good work. We think our age the greatest in point of work that the world has ever known, and perhaps it is the greatest in quantity, but how about the quality of our work? Is it not often wretchedly superficial work? An age it is of wonderful discoveries, of marvellous inventions, but of work done in a hurry, done to sell, done as cheaply as possible, and so work which will not last.

One great lesson Ruskin has tried to teach, that

good work is "work that tells the truth." The character of much of our work to-day is "that it tells a lie"—even in some of our Churches we see stucco and plaster made to imitate stone and carving. In the fifteenth century, for instance, we find that however humble the work was it was done thoroughly, the workman *finished* his work as well as he could—the work of that age tells the *truth*.

So with our Lord; how often we read, "when He had finished," "when He had made an end."* How few things we finish! We think of many works which might be done, perhaps we even begin many; but we leave them scattered along the pathway of our life half finished, marred and spoiled by our hurry.

Try to finish your work piece by piece, my brethren, do not be anxious to do a great deal of work, do not be ambitious to do great works; only strive to finish what GOD gives you to do. Let your motto be the same as your Master's, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."† Whether your work be the work of

* *Cf.* S. Matt. xi. 1; xiii. 53; xix. 1: xxvi. 1; S. John iv. 34; v. 26; xvii. 4; xix. 30.

† S. John iv. 34.

a seamstress with her needle, or of a statesman governing a great nation, try to let it be true work, honest work, work well done.

III.

There are three principles of work which we may especially learn from our Lord's example, and with a brief notice of them we shall conclude.

1. The *motive* of work. A man's work will be judged by its motive. What was the motive of our Lord's work? We have just heard—"to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." The motive of our work must be to glorify God, to do His will, to finish His work. Whatever our work may be we must do it well, that we may offer it to God. Remember that all work is done in God's presence. Many years ago I was asked to give an address to the girls who were being educated at a Sisters' School. As I was considering what subject would be appropriate my eye caught a little engraving hanging upon the walls of the Sisters' parlour. The subject was our Lord in the Carpenter's shop at Nazareth, planing a piece of wood and looking upwards, as though He realized His Father's presence; while underneath was printed the words:

"Work in the presence of GOD." Do your work with that motive; realize that you are working in GOD'S presence, and offer each work to GOD. This will ensure your doing your work well; as unto the Lord, and not merely for man.

2. The *spirit* of work. Work depends not only upon the motive, but upon the spirit in which it is done. The secret of our Lord's work, of our Lord's life, humanly speaking, was the life of prayer which He led. Do your work in the spirit of prayer. Upon your knees, before you go out to your work in the morning—it need not take you long—put yourself in GOD'S presence, and ask for grace to do your work that day well, to do it for GOD'S glory; and then when night comes round, and you go over the day in making your self-examination, ask yourself, in regard to the work you have done, whether you did it well, recollectedly, and for GOD'S glory; examine further whether it has been blemished by selfishness or vanity.

3. And then lastly the *end* of work. For what is it you are working? to what end do you look forward? Is it success in this world? to reap the harvest in this life? to gain the prize, a crown of fading pine leaves, which the world holds out? He

who works for success is like one who snatches at some glorious rose upon a rose bush, and as he grasps it finds his hand pierced and torn with the thorns. The end for which the Christian works is placed, not in this world, but in the world beyond—"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."* Work which is done for an earthly end will pass away with the world, work which is done for God and for eternity will follow us into the world beyond, will follow us to the Judgment Seat of Christ, where we shall give account of how we have used the talents committed to our charge.

"I must work the works of Him that sent Me," says the Lord, "while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work." How short is our work time in this world! How soon the night will close over us!—that night when no man can work. Are we working the works of Him that sent us? Are we labouring for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life? or are we slaving for the meat that perisheth? The night cometh wherein no man can work—the night that brings rest to the weary but faithful toiler.

* Rev. xiv. 13.

It is no long night, that short night of the grave, and then comes the dawning of the endless day, of that life wherein our works do follow us, if they have been done aright, that day of which our Lord says: "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

IV.

In Friendship.

S. John xv. 13-16.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."

WE have gazed into that wondrous mirror, the life of our Lord, this Lent; we have seen reflected therein the pattern of the Ideal Man—our Example in Temptation, in Prayer, in Work. And now to-day we are to look to Him as our Example in Friendship. What sacred thoughts are bound up in that word "friendship"! Friendship is one of the great powers which God has given us to meet the storms of life, to stimulate us to effort in the path of duty. And yet, friendship often has its dangers. Sometimes we learn our first

knowledge of evil from a friend; sometimes it is from friendship that temptation comes to us, through our affections. And yet, while friendship is often perverted, often used by Satan as an instrument of temptation, it is meant by God to be one of the most sacred gifts of life.

When we turn to our Blessed Lord's Life and Example, we see of course nothing but the helpful, nothing but the sacred side of friendship. We see our Lord recognizing the helpfulness of friendship when He sends out His Apostles by twos—not alone, but the two friends going out together to do a common work, for a common end. When He sends out His seventy disciples in the same way, it is still in twos, in pairs, that He sends them.

And we have S. John, the disciple whom our Blessed Lord loved, as the very pattern of friendship—one who was united to our Lord in the closest bonds of affection and sympathy. And again in my text our Lord distinctly says, "I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you *friends;* for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."

In Friendship.

I.

Let us this morning look at some of the ways in which friendship is helpful, see how they are illustrated in our Blessed Lord's Life, and then examine how far they may be found in our own friendships.

1. And first the *sympathy* of friendship: How sweet it is! what a marvellous power, enabling man to face the difficulties and to endure the trials of life! The sympathy of a dear friend how it stimulates our flagging energy and lightens our heaviest burdens, but we must remember it has its dangers. There is the danger of relying on mere human friendship, instead of seeking the sympathy of GOD Himself; the danger of friendship leading us to give to our friend what is wrong—wrong sympathy; of sympathizing with him, perhaps, when he is altogether in the wrong.

And yet in spite of all the dangers connected with it, how helpful we often find the power of sympathy in friendship! We see it in our Lord's intercourse with His Apostles, and especially with S. John—S. John who leaned upon His breast at supper, the disciple whom Jesus loved. We see it in His reproach to S. Philip: "Have I been so long time

with you, and hast thou not known Me, Philip?" And what cannot sympathy do in our life?—another bearing our burden with us; "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," *—and we ourselves striving to bear the burdens of our friend; together going through the struggle of life hand in hand, as the Apostles were sent out two and two to do their work.

2. And then there is not only sympathy, but the *encouragement* of friendship. How often we are discouraged! how often we think life is scarcely worth living, when the work to which we have given our best efforts promises so little result that we are tempted to give it up! but a word of encouragement from the friend who takes an interest both in our trials and in our efforts, how wonderfully it encourages us!

3. Then the *stimulating power* of friendship, of fellowship in thought and work! There have probably been few great thinkers who have not had some friend who has stimulated their powers; someone with whom they could talk over the thoughts which were surging in their minds and which promised such abundant fruit. It was the stimulating sym-

* Gal. vi. 2.

pathy of the friend which helped them to the great result.

In the same way in work—fellowship in work! to discuss plans, to talk over hopes and fears, to picture glorious visions of successful work, especially if it be good work—how helpful here again, how stimulating is the power of friendship!

II.

Then there is another side of life—the *sorrows* and *difficulties* of life—in which friendship helps to comfort and to console us.

1. In the hour of bereavement, when all life seems dark, when our affections are bleeding from the wounds they have received, how great is the comfort of the friend, who says but little, but shows by the pressure of the hand, by the tone of the voice, by the look of the eye, that he realizes our sorrow and suffers with us.

We find something like this in our Lord's life when they came and told Him and His Apostles of the death of S. John Baptist—and you must remember that S. John Baptist had been the master, the teacher, the friend of most of the Apostles; certainly of S. Peter and S. Andrew, S. James and S. John,

and probably of S. Philip; for these were all disciples in the school of the Baptist before they left their master and followed Christ. And when they heard that one to whom they owed so much, to whom they owed that preparation of spiritual life which enabled them to receive and follow Christ —when they heard not only that he was dead, but that he had died an ignominious and cruel death to gratify the vengeance of a wicked woman, that he had died in prison by the headsman's axe,—then our Lord shows His sympathy with their sorrow, and says, "Come ye apart into a desert place and rest a while." Our Lord takes them with Him to the desert place, to the wilderness, that He may comfort them in their sorrow. When we have suffered bereavement, we wish to be alone; so our Lord takes them into the solitude of the wilderness to comfort them.

2. Again, in matters of difficulty, how often we need advice! and whose advice are we so likely to seek as the advice of a good friend? Our Lord was always advising His Apostles, always answering their difficulties, not merely telling them what to do, but showing them why they should do it, tracing back to great principles the advice He gave.

How often now we need advice! There is the danger, of course, in seeking the advice of a friend, that so many friends only try to tell us to do what they know we wish to do. There is that weak, spurious friendship which is not helpful, because it strives to please, rather than to help the friend. There are some friends who, if we go to them and state the two sides of the question we have to decide, will always try to find out which is the one we wish to do, and will then supply us with reasons or excuses for doing that; this, however, is not friendship. But a friend who, while loving us dearly, will be just and impartial when we ask for advice, who will try to decide the question upon its merits, who will tell us what he believes to be best—how much help there is in the advice of such a friend!

It is often difficult for us to decide questions for ourselves because of the bias of our own self-love. We cannot trust our judgment when our own interests are concerned, we could advise another well enough in a case in which we were not an interested party; but when our affections or our desires are mixed up in the decision there is the danger, on the one hand, of our deciding against ourselves just because we are afraid of trusting our-

selves, and think we ought to do the hardest thing, which may not, after all, be the right thing; or else, on the other hand, of deciding in accordance with our own wishes, but not on principles of right and wrong.

Here friendship comes in with a calm, unbiased judgment, which realizes its responsibilities, and strives to help a friend to the right decision.

3. Again there are times in friendship when we not only have to give advice which is unpalatable, but when we have even to rebuke. It is painful to rebuke a friend, but it is often salutary and necessary. Our Lord did not shrink from it. When He helped S. Peter as he was sinking beneath the waves, when He calmed the storm at His Apostles' prayer *—He rebuked them. And sometimes even without speaking a word we can rebuke a friend, as our Lord rebuked S. Peter after he had denied Him. Not a word was spoken, but our Lord turned and looked at Peter. There was a world of reproach in that look, and Peter realized it, and "went out and wept bitterly." Sometimes, when it is not wise to speak, we can at least "look" our disapproval of what is wrong in our friend.

* S. Matt. xiv. 31; *cf.* S. Mark iv. 40.

III.

But what is the power on which all friendship is based?—love! that divine power which is the salvation of society, of the world; that power which holds society together in its lawful relationships; and one of these relationships is friendship,—unselfish love, self-sacrificing love; as our Lord said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." What love! what loyalty! what self-sacrifice! what unselfishness!—our Lord proposes as the ideal of friendship that a man should lay down his life for his friend.

The love of a true friend is one of GOD'S most precious gifts in life! Prize it, do not trifle with it, realize that it is a great privilege, but realize that it carries with it also responsibilities, that there are times when even friendship must yield to duty, that there are times when a higher call leads us to give up even the most sacred friendships.

Our Lord upon the Cross teaches us this lesson of absolute submission to GOD'S Will, when He gives up S. John, the Apostle whom He loved, the friend of His life. He gives up S. John and His Blessed Mother, and in giving them up He unites them by a new

bond; He says, "Woman, behold thy son! Behold thy Mother!" and from that time forth S. John took her to his own home to live with him.

There are times when we have to give up a friend, when, although it may break our heart, we find that the one whom we love is called away from us to some other love. How often in such a trial the passion of jealousy is aroused? when someone else has won the heart we thought was ours, when someone else engrosses the friend who once gave all his heart to us; then comes the temptation to envy, and jealousy, to anger, and bitterness.

What did our Lord do? He gave up S. John and His Blessed Mother, and gladly saw them united in a new bond, a new relationship. So there are times in life when, either because the friend is becoming dangerous to us on account of an inordinate affection on one side or the other, or because a new affection is springing up in their lives—there are times when we must be unselfish and surrender, for the love of God, at the call of duty, even a friend.

What a joy, then, is true friendship! the sympathy of a friend, to lighten the burden of life; the simple straightforwardness of a friend which leaves no room for suspecting any hidden purpose, any ulterior

motive; the generosity of a friend who never judges us harshly, but always strives to interpret our actions in the best sense.

And this friendship, which is one of the great gifts of life, we see at its best, as in a mirror, in our Blessed Lord. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," says our Lord. We can study our Lord's life from the point of view of friendship and learn how to rule our friendships, how to make them helpful, how to keep them pure; and learn that when our friendship is not in accordance with the example set us by our Blessed Lord, then the time has come for giving up the friend who is a hindrance to us.

But possibly some may say, "I have no such friendships; life with me is dark and sad because those whom I love have either died or grown cold in their friendship. I have no friends." Then remember One Who is the Friend of the friendless, our Lord Himself. We wish perhaps that we could be transported back to those days when He walked with S. John on earth. Let us remember that, though we cannot see Him with our bodily eyes,

we can possess Him; that He is our Friend, that He says to us, as truly as He said to His Apostles, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. I have not called you servants, I have called you friends." Jesus is the Friend of the friendless, offering us sympathy in our sorrows, encouragement in our work, giving us, through His Holy Spirit, counsel in our difficulties, comforting us in our bereavements, directing us in the path in which we should go, reproaching us and rebuking us when we are doing wrong, loving us so greatly that He is always patient with us, guiding us as a friend through life, and taking us when life is over into His everlasting friendship in His Kingdom of Heaven!

V.

In Suffering.

1 S. Peter ii. 21.

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps."

IN Temptation, in Prayer, in Work, and in Friendship, we have seen that our Blessed Lord is ever our Example. And now we turn to Suffering—that universal experience of life—and in this, too, we find our Lord everywhere our Example. Indeed our Blessed Lord's life, from the cradle to the grave, was essentially a life of suffering; for it was the life of the Holy Cross. Our Lord came into this world to suffer and to die. He came into this world to take away our sins; and the means by which those sins were atoned for and taken away, as S. Peter says, was suffering.

I.

There are two strange mysteries in human life which confront us at every step—the mystery of

sin and the mystery of suffering. And they are most closely correlated. For sin is disobedience to law, sin comes from disordered relationships; and suffering, likewise, is almost always the result of disobedience to some law of our being, or else to disordered relationships in our life; so that sin and suffering are most intimately connected.

Suffering is the penance of sin, not only in the sense of punishment, but also as its remedy, for by suffering we are sanctified. Suffering is the penance of sin, and yet not necessarily of our own individual sin, for it is probably true that those who suffer most are those who are most free from sin. Suffering is not measured out to us, as the Jews of old thought, in exact proportion to our own individual sins; on the contrary, those who live the most holy lives often have the greater share of suffering.

And why is this? Surely it is because suffering is the penance for *all* sin, and those who are living the most holy lives, and are therefore closest to our Lord, have the blessed privilege of fellowship in His Passion, which implies suffering for others. Without suffering we cannot be conformed to His likeness, and so S. Paul, in his great prayer in the Epistle to

the Philippians,* prays that he may know the power of our Lord's Resurrection "and the fellowship of His sufferings." The word here translated "fellowship" implies a sharing or partaking in His sufferings, and we cannot know the *power* of our Lord's Resurrection, we cannot experience the strength of that new life which comes to us through the merits of our Lord's victory over death and resurrection from the grave, unless we are willing with Him to taste the cup of sorrow, unless we are glad with Him to bear our cross, unless we are trying with Him to bear, in a penitential spirit, the sufferings which God sends us in this life.

Looked upon in this way, suffering ceases to be an evil. Sin is the evil, suffering is the good; for it is by suffering that the weakness, which is the result of sin, is removed. To those, therefore, who S. Peter tells us, are "called" to suffer, belongs the blessed privilege of sharing in the very sufferings of Christ.

We need, at the outset then, to strive to realize this. How often in life people become rebellious and discontented, people become hard and sour, because suffering is their lot! They dash them-

* Phil. iv. 10.

selves, as it were, in vain against the walls of their prison house, they hurt themselves uselessly in their struggle to get free from suffering. They have to bear it just the same; the pain is not one whit less, the sorrow is not lightened by their struggles or by their rebellion; but they lose all the merit, all the sanctification which GOD meant should be theirs through patiently bearing the suffering.

Try then, dear brethren, as one of the most important lessons of spiritual life, to realize the *privilege* of suffering. I do not mean go out of your way to suffer. Some of the Saints have done that; but we are not saints in that sense, and if I were to tell you to seek suffering, I might be calling upon you to do more than you had grace and strength to do. But I do say, when GOD sends you suffering, do not meet it in any spirit of rebellion, do not think that GOD is dealing hardly with you, or cares not for you: remember, "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."* Remember, then, that each suffering which GOD sends you is a mark of love, and is for your good.

Do not take the world's warped view of suffering.

* Heb. xii. 6.

If there were no life but this, suffering might be an evil; but we believe that this life is but the school in which we are prepared for a life of glory that awaits us beyond the grave, and if suffering be the great disciplinary force of our school-days, we can see that suffering is a blessing, and not an evil. Sin is the evil, suffering is the good; for suffering is the means by which the evil of sin is undone. How often the world takes the very opposite view! Suffering it looks on as the evil, and rebels against it; sin, if only it be presented in some gilded form, it regards almost as a good! Let us pray that our eyes may be opened, that we may have the gift of that Wisdom which cometh down from above to enable us to see all things in their true relation to eternity, that we may learn to hate, not suffering, but sin; and learn to prize the privilege of bearing the Cross of Suffering with our Lord.

II.

But let us turn to our Lord's life and see how He is our great Example in suffering. As I have said, from the cradle to the grave, from the beginning to the end, our Blessed Lord's life was one long life of suffering; I shall not therefore attempt to follow it throughout, but shall take three points in it which

bring before us the three classes of suffering we have to bear.

We suffer in mind, we suffer in body, we suffer in soul.

1. We suffer in mind. From the point of view of religion there is the suffering of doubt, which comes at times like a cloud between almost every Christian and God. But we suffer not only from doubt, but from fears—fears whether we shall persevere, fears whether we can stand against the storm of trial and temptation, fears, perhaps, whether we are even now in the narrow way.

We suffer from perplexity, from the difficulty of deciding our duty in the many questions which come before us. And we suffer in mind lastly, and perhaps most often, in what may be called the "worries" of life; the irritations, the trifling troubles of every day—trifles in themselves, and each one easy to be borne if it stood alone, but coming so continually, coming so thickly, the worries of life often seem to overwhelm us. Yes, worry of mind is one of the greatest causes of suffering. Many a man or woman would rather bear physical pain than the continual worry about the future, the continual perplexity about the present—

those doubts and fears which harass them and rob them of peace of mind.

We turn to our Lord and we follow Him through His whole life of sorrow and suffering, but we find that He seems to be always so calm—with Him there is no doubt, no perplexity, no fear, no worry. There is one scene in our Lord's life which seems to be the climax of the concentrated suffering of His mind—that time, between twelve and three upon Good Friday, when hanging upon the Cross, doing penance for the sin of the world, darkness rolled, not only around His Cross, hiding from sight the light of day, but seems to have rolled into His very Soul, and extorted from Him that one cry of complaint, the only one in His whole life, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Once only in His life does our Lord reveal to us the sufferings of His mind.

In all His other sufferings, which were so continuous, His mind seems calm and unruffled; but then, as the darkness gathered round the Cross, then, as the sun in its shame hid its face from that direst deed that was ever done upon this earth—then the darkness seems to have rolled in upon the mind of our Blessed Lord, and He cries, "My God, My God,

why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It was not a cry of distrust, for it was "My" GOD; He did not say "O GOD," but "My GOD," and the word "My" shows that He was holding on, clinging with faith to His Father, even in the dereliction upon the Cross.

But the other words, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" tell of a sorrow of mind, tell of an intensity of mental suffering which was, without doubt, the greatest that any human mind has ever known. And so, my brother, in your hour of mental trouble, when doubts and fears, when perplexities and worries distract your mind, think of our Lord on the Cross, in the darkness uttering those words; and, kneeling beside Him, cry to your Father in heaven, "My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken me?" and the answer will come back to you, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." *

Before we pass from this point, we must, however, remember that most of our suffering of mind is our own fault. It was not so with our Lord, for He was sinless. All His sufferings were caused by others; but our [illegible], our worry and perplexity, co[illegible] ordinate love of creatures [illegible]ust in GOD. Why, my

[illegible]. 5.

brother, are you so troubled about the future? about your success in this world? Because you love this world and its creatures so dearly, and because you trust GOD so little.

In this, our Lord's trial was different from yours. In Him there was no distrust, no clinging to the world. If, instead of distrusting GOD, instead of worrying, you were to take some of those wondrous verses in the Psalms, which tell of trust in GOD, and were to try to make them your own acts of faith, how helpful you would find them.

You are told (in Psalm xxxvii. 1), "Fret not thyself." Perhaps you say, "But I cannot help fretting." But if what troubles you can, by some effort of your own, be removed, why fret about it? why not rise up and meet it, and overcome it? Or, on the other hand, if what troubles you cannot by any effort of your own be removed, what is the use of fretting about it? Learn to bear it as your cross, do not worry about it. Say Psalm xxvii., the Psalm of those in mental trouble: "Th[illegible] my Light and my Salvation; whom [illegible]r? the Lord is the Strength of my [illegible]all I be afraid?" And the[illegible] ending, "Tarry thou th[illegible]

and He shall comfort thine heart; and put thou thy trust in the Lord." Trust in GOD is the remedy for suffering of the mind.

2. But then we have to suffer in body, through sickness or accident. This frame of earth in which we tabernacle during our sojourn in this world, how frail it is! how full of weakness and of pain! And yet, even here, in the majority of cases, we can trace our pain or sickness to our own fault, to the breaking of some law of health, very likely to our luxury of life, or our gluttony, or love of ease; to eating what is not good for us, or in the pursuit of pleasure, to neglecting the laws of health. Our sickness is—not always, but very often—our own fault, the direct result of our own sin; and, if it be inherited, why then it simply puts back the difficulty a generation; sickness is the result of sin, of our own sin or of the sins of our forefathers.

Where then can we find it in our Lord Who knew no sin? Our Lord's most Sacred Body was not only free [illegible]ess throughout His life, but it was incapa[illegible]use it had never sinned, b[illegible]man body.

[illegible]ur Example in pain and [illegible]? Not in any sickness

which came through His own sin, but in that pain and suffering which came from the sin of the world. The physical tortures of the Passion—they were not the result, as our pains are, of any sin of His; but they were the result of the sins of others, of the sin He came to bear and so to take away. There were the scourges tearing His most Sacred Body, the thorns piercing His most Holy Brow, the nails driven through His Hands and His Feet, the agonizing tension upon every muscle and nerve as the Cross was lifted from the ground. These are our Examples, and when we are called upon to bear pain, when we have to face physical suffering, then let us look up at the Cross and in our bodily pain unite ourselves with our Lord, offering our pains in union with His sufferings, offering them to GOD the Father. "He suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps"; He suffered for us, leaving us the blessed privilege of suffering with Him!

3. And then, lastly, there is t[illegible]vision of suffering—the suffering [illegible] the suffering in our affections [illegible]t. the hardest of all to bear [illegible] this comes so often thro[illegible]

we have to suffer in our affections, because our affections have been set on that which is not lawfully within our reach, that which has been forbidden to us by the law of God.

But, whether it be from our own fault, or from those many, many heart-wrenchings which come through love, even in right affections, in right relationships—the sorrows, the pains of husband or wife at the suffering or perhaps sin of the other; the pains, what greater? of the mother weeping over her erring, wayward, sinful child—all these sufferings of the human soul we find in their fulness throughout our Lord's Life, and reaching their culminating point upon the Cross. For throughout His Life He suffered, "being grieved at the hardness of men's hearts." He suffered in seeing those for whom He had come to die refuse His proffered grace, turn away from His words of love!

And then we reach the climax of this suffering in the crucifixion of the Sacred Soul of Jesus in Gethsemane! the only moment in our Lord's Life when He seemed, as it were, to have broken down beneath the weight of sorrow; the time when we are told of the "strong crying and tears"; when He prayed that the cup might pass from Him; when the blood

started from the sacred pores of His skin and trickled down to the ground in the intensity of His anguish!

And remember, in Gethsemane there was no suffering of our Lord's body, not yet had He been scourged or crucified. Gethsemane was the crucifixion of the Soul of Jesus; the suffering in His affections, as He looked out upon the world and saw all those souls for whom He died who would pass Him by; as He looked not only back upon the long past which He had come to undo, but forward to the great future even to the end of the world. He looked upon the souls that, Lent after Lent, would hear the story of His love and sorrow, would meditate upon His Passion, and then pass Him by, going on in their sin. What could wound the heart of Jesus more than this? Not only their ingratitude—that one could believe He would have borne, for there was nothing of selfishness in the love of our Lord—but their own wilful destruction of all that was good in their own nature, their wilful choice of eternal death.

My brethren, we do not know what eternal death is! I may use the words of rhetoric to try to describe it, but how can I, or anyone else, tell you what eternal

death is? For ever and ever to be separated from GOD! to have seen Him, to have known His beauty, to have heard of His love, and to have realized at the moment of the judgment what that love, what that beauty is; and then, with every faculty of your nature craving for it, every power of your soul realizing what you have lost! to live in eternity without GOD! That was what brought the tears to the eyes of our Blessed Lord, and the Blood bursting through His skin to the ground—not only your ingratitude, not only your rejection of His love, not only your neglect of His voice, not only that you should not care for His sorrow, not only that you should pass Him by upon the Cross; but what you would have to suffer for it—the eternity of your loss!

He loved you. I suppose that everyone in this Church to-day has someone whom they love,—the wife her husband, the husband his wife, the mother her child, the child her mother, the friend some other friend. Think what it would be if you knew the future of the one you love; if you saw that by their own wilful rejection of your words they were laying up for themselves, not only the greatest sorrow which earth can conceive, but a sorrow so intense that no words of human language can ever paint it!

and then you get some idea of our Lord's wounded affections.

There may be someone here to-day, who knows all about the teachings of the Church in regard to our Lord's suffering and death, who with the lips professes to love Christ, while with your heart you love sin. And think, my brother, He loves you, He loved you and gave Himself for you as though there were no other one for whom He had to die; think of Him in His Passion, seeing you live on in your sin, not in ignorance but against light; seeing you persist in your sin, even when He pleads with you through the voice of conscience and through the voice of the Church. Think of our Lord seeing the result of this in your soul through eternity! This was the climax in the sufferings of our Blessed Lord's soul! The wound to His affections, the wringing of His loving Heart! The culminating point of all His wrongs.

So may we point to Him as our Example in wounded love. He saw His friends desert Him, He saw His disciples turn back to the world, or flee like cowards in the hour of His need. He saw the time come when He had to send away His Mother and S. John from the Cross. He gave up all He loved, His Heart was broken; but all that, I venture

to think, was little, compared with the sorrow which perhaps you caused Him when He saw that you would hear of it all in this year of grace, that you would know what you ought to do to serve Him, but that you would go home from Church and choose your own sinful will, and therefore suffer for ever by being separated from GOD in the land of eternal death!

Our Lord is indeed our Example in Suffering. No phase of human woe, no condition of human grief, that you cannot find in His life. Let us then, this Passiontide, enter upon the contemplation, once more, of our Lord's sorrows, not with mere sentimental grief for the pain which He endured, but in loving sorrow for the sins in our life which caused His sorrows. Let us then, as we weep for our Lord's sufferings, weep also for our sins. As we gaze upon Him crucified for us, let us try in some small way, at least, to crucify our own sinful affections; and let us make our repentance, this Passiontide, so deep, so real, so humble, so painful, that we may be able with sincerity to pray the prayer of S. Paul, that we may "know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings."

None can ever know the power of the Resurrection life of Christ who has not first tasted the chalice of His woes; none who have not been sharers in His sorrows, who have not striven to "follow in His steps" of suffering, can follow in His life of light and glory. So keep Passiontide with your Lord as your Example in Suffering, that you may be able to keep Easter with your Lord as your Example in victory and in joy. "He suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps."

VI.

In Death.

NUMBERS XXIII. 10.

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

WE have reached the last Sunday in Lent; the end of the tragedy of the Passion is fast approaching, and we may well take for our subject to-day that which the holy Gospel suggests—Jesus as our Example in the hour of death. We have considered Him as our Example in Temptation, in Prayer, in Work, in Friendship, in Suffering, and now, at the solemn season when He prepares to leave this world of woe, let us turn our thoughts to Jesus as our Example in the hour of death.

And where can we find a better text than this—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his"? There was but One in this world to Whom one could fitly apply the title of "the Righteous," our Lord Jesus Christ Himself;

and when we pray, in the words of the wicked prophet Balaam, "Let me die the death of the righteous!" it is like saying, "let me die as my Master died, let my last end be like His."

I.

First, we observe that our Blessed Lord sets before us a new view of death. If on the one hand it is gloomy, if it tells us that death is the dire penalty, the necessary penance of sin, yet on the other hand it is not without brightness, for it tells us that death is the paying of the debt of sin, and is therefore the entrance into the land of everlasting life, that it is the gate of heaven itself.

Some dread death. Well, well may *they* dread it who are not striving to live the life of the righteous! Some dread death because it is the end of this world in which all their hopes are placed. But to those whose hopes are beyond the grave, death is but the end of their exile here, is but the door which ushers them into the ante-chamber of the great King, there to wait a little while till they are entirely purified from every taint of sin, and then to be ushered into His very Presence; *Mors janua vitæ*—death is the gate of life.

In Death.

Our Blessed Lord teaches us how to prepare for death, that is, for a good death—"Right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Our Lord teaches how to prepare that our death may be like "the death of His saints," precious in the sight of God. We should learn this with great care, for it is the most important science of this world. All else that we learn will be absolutely useless to us, if we do not learn to die well. Those sciences which have engrossed our time and caused us to put forth every effort of our intellect to master them, those sciences will be worthless to us, unless to them all we add that one which alone can make them endure in the world beyond—the science of dying well. And who can teach us that science like Jesus? Where can we learn it so well as standing this week by the death-bed of the Holy Cross, and learning how Jesus died—died for us, died to teach us how to die?

II.

The fundamental principle surely is this, that none can die the death of the righteous who are not trying to live the life of the righteous; that our Lord's death teaches us first, that we must follow His life. We cannot face death with the calmness, with

the joy which He faced it, "Who for the joy set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame," unless our life has been an attempt to follow Him—has been the life of the righteous.

But from His death-bed He speaks. How we treasure up the last words of anyone whom we love! how we hang over them as they lie dying on their bed to catch every word! And well, well may we listen to the words of Christ, teaching us in seven sermons how to die.

1. What is the first? "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."* "Father, forgive them!"—we must die then in charity with all men. We must forgive all who have wronged us, and we must seek forgiveness of all whom we have wronged.

And why? Because this is the very condition of our own forgiveness; for in the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, after telling of his punishment, our Lord added, "So likewise shall thy heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your heart forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."† And so to be in charity with all men is necessary as the condition that we shall be in charity with GOD.

* S. Luke xxiii. 34. † S. Matt. xviii. 35.

If there be in your heart one lingering thought of hatred, it is a witness that in your heart there is not the love of GOD. To be in charity with all men is the proof that we are in charity with GOD; and if we are not in charity with GOD, if we do not love GOD, heaven would be our hell.

We must be in charity with all men! It is not necessary, my brethren, it is not wise to put off till the day of death your preparation; so I would suggest that this week you should make your preparation after the example of our Lord. Ask yourself—Am I in perfect charity with all the world? Do I forgive as I hope to be forgiven? Do I therefore love GOD?

2. But we must pass on quickly. The second Word was: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." * After we have made our peace with the world, after we have forgiven and sought forgiveness, after we have made sure that we are in charity with all men, then we must begin distributing our worldly goods, remembering that we are GOD'S stewards, and that in passing out of this world we cannot take one penny with us, and that in leaving them behind we are responsible for

* S. Luke xxiii. 43.

the way in which we provide for their distribution.

Now our Blessed Lord, on the Cross, teaches us that there are two things to be thought of—or, rather, two classes of persons; for the second and third Words are what you might call "the making of His will."

A poor robber in his misery, in his penitence, face to face with his sins, turns to our Lord and says, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." And our Lord, with that generosity which is at once our example and our duty, gives him a share of that Kingdom. "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise—in My Kingdom." So that a share of our goods should be left to works of charity and religion; I do not say to works of philanthropy—not that they are not good, but because the world will take sufficient care of mere works of philanthropy.

You need to care, not only for the bodies, but to help the souls of men. Our Lord did not do anything for that robber's body, He left him there to die on the cross without any mitigation of his sufferings; because it is quite a mistake to think that suffering is an evil. But our Lord upon the Cross thought of that robber's soul, of his future in the

world to come, and gave him a share in His heavenly Kingdom. We then should give to works for the souls of sinners, for reclaiming the lost, in other words to the work of the Church of Christ. This first, for our Lord teaches us to begin as He began, as far away as possible from Himself. He begins with those who were His enemies, and forgives them; and then He comes to the robber who had been His enemy, and who desired to become His friend, and He gives him a share of His Kingdom.

3. And then the third Word—"Woman, behold thy son! Behold thy Mother!"* Here our Lord thinks of those whom He loves, those who are bound to Him in the closest and dearest ties of relationship and friendship, and provides for them. There should be, then, two thoughts in making your will: first, your duty to the Church, and then your duty to those you leave behind whom you love, or who have the claims of blood upon you.

When you are thinking of making your will, and of your duty towards the Church and the poor, remember that text which will be said over your grave: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their

* S. John xix. 26, 27.

labours, *and their works do follow them.*" Those who have thus thought of the poor, years and years after they have rested from their labours their works go on *in this world*—"their works do follow them." Nothing else will follow you, unless it be your sins. Here, then, we see our Lord arranging His affairs in preparation for death, providing for works of charity and for those whom He loves, whom He leaves behind Him.

Then our Lord, turning away from the world, and turning to His Father in heaven, teaches us in the last four Words how to prepare our soul to meet God.

4. First, there is "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The pains of mind, the dread of death—part of the penalty for sin. The pains of mind are no sign whatever of want of sanctity. I have seen a hardened sinner die without any pain of mind; and I have seen some of the greatest of God's Saints die trembling at the thought of the justice of God. The pains of mind are part of the penance which we must lovingly bear, if it be God's will, to the very end.

5. And then He said, "I thirst"; * by that

* S. John xix. 28.

bearing witness to the weakness and pains of body. Some of us may have to die a painful death. Shall we say, "O Lord, spare me from pain in the hour of my death"? Nay, rather let us say, "O GOD, Thou knowest what is best for me; give me what Thou knowest to be best." For the pains of the body are also a penance for the sins of the body, and may be necessary for the sanctification of the soul. Better far to bear pain here than to bear it hereafter!

Do not let us shrink from the pain which GOD may send us at the hour of death; rather let us look to our Lord upon the Cross, and, contemplating His great pains of body as well as of mind, let us say, "Not my will, O GOD, but Thine, be done. If this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, Thy will be done." Pains of mind and pains of body offered to GOD and borne in reliance upon Him are part of the preparation for a good death.

6. Then the sixth Word: "It is finished"—what does that teach us? What is finished? Life, opportunity, work, penitence. It tells, surely, of the ending of our preparation; the last self-examination, in which we review our whole life, and see how much has been left unfinished of what we ought to have

done, how much has been badly done, sinfully done; it tells of our last self-examination, our last Confession, of the last Sacraments.

And then, when the Church has done all for us that it can, we must say, "It is finished," and turn to God, and, with one mighty act of oblation and love, say, like our Lord, "Father, into Thy Hands I commend my spirit"—the last commendation of the soul to God! Then the work of preparation of the soul for death is over, and we bow our head as Jesus did, and leave this world of sorrow for the world of light, and love, and joy.

III.

Such is the Example our Lord sets us of the preparation for a good death. Now remember three things:

1. First, we are not likely to die the death of the righteous, we are not likely to have a good death, unless we are trying to live a good life. Do not put the preparation off till the day of death, and think you can do all then. Do what you have to do now, and consecrate to God your health and strength, manhood, your opportunities; and do not wait you are standing upon the threshold of God's

Kingdom, and expect then to make your preparation to die.

2. Secondly, make an "act of faith" that you believe you will die at the time which is best for you. This may seem to you difficult to say, and yet I am sure it is true. We should, therefore, not be anxious about the time of our death; if death seems to threaten you from some accident or disease, say to yourself, God loves me; not one sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge and will; and if God wills that I should die now, it is because now is the best time for me to die. If He were to hear my prayer, and give me some years more to live, after His wisdom and love had willed for me to die, it might not be for my good; for though I think I should use those years well, God may know that I should not.

God calls us out of this world, I believe, for one of two reasons: either, because we have become sanctified and are ready for His Kingdom, when it would not be kind to leave us here longer; or else because we have become so hardened against His grace that our day of penitence is past, and if we were left here we should only ruin other souls by our bad example. Either way, the day on which God calls us to die is the best for us.

We should pray in regard to our death that it may be in all things in accordance with GOD'S will, as to time, place, and manner. "Into Thy Hands I commend it all, O my Father in heaven; Thy will be done in my death as in my life."

3. And then, thirdly and lastly, remember those words of S. Paul, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* S. Paul was one who had studied not only the life and death of Jesus, but had consecrated his life and been ready to suffer death for Jesus Christ again and again. Finally, as he knelt upon the ground in the Appian Way at Tre Fontane, and the sword flashed in the sunlight, and the martyr's head fell to the ground, he fulfilled his own prophecy—for him to live had been Christ, and for him to die was indeed gain.

Take that for the motto of your life, for the spirit of your preparation for death. Only remember that if you cannot say the first part, you cannot say the second. It is not true for anyone to say, "For me to die is gain," unless they can say, "For me to live is Christ." If you are living for Christ, following Christ, imitating Christ, then you can say with absolute confidence, "For me to die is gain."

* Phil. i. 21.

In Death.

Put together these two texts—the one from the Old, the other from the New Testament; the one uttered by the false prophet, a man who was false to his vocation, Balaam, and the other by a man who was true to it, S. Paul. Balaam, by the light of inspiration given to him by GOD, said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"—thus pointing to Christ, the only Righteous One; and S. Paul, coming after, said, "For me to live is Christ, and therefore for me to die is gain."

Take these two texts, let them be the rule of your life, and they will be the law of your death; let them be the principle by which you order your daily life, and they will enable you to meet with calmness and joy your last end. "Let me die the death of the Righteous, and let my last end be like His!"—look up to the Cross and see what His last end was, and then say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Third Course.

THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS IN THE LIGHT OF THE BEATITUDES.

THIRD COURSE.—THE SEVEN WORDS.

I.

Introductory Address.

S. John xii. 32.

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

THESE words were uttered by our Lord on the threshold of His Passion. Nearly two thousand years have passed, and the crowds, which gather around the Cross each Good Friday, bear witness to the fulfilment of His prophecy; for there is no doctrine of our Faith, no devotion of our religion, which can compare in attractive force with the Passion.

All over the world to-day multitudes will be drawing near to the Cross to listen to the last Words of our Lord. You and I, my brethren, have kept Good Friday many years, and yet we are drawn each Good Friday, with an attraction as irresistible as

ever, to listen to the same utterances, the same words, and yet always to find some new lesson, some new truth to take home to help us in our lives.

We have pondered over these Words so often that to avoid mere repetition it is well for us each year to take some different but definite standpoint from which to regard them. Let us, then, to-day consider them thus:

The principal needs of humanity are always the same, and may be summed up under certain clearly-defined heads. Our Blessed Lord came into this world to supply these needs, and on three great occasions of His life His words were addressed especially to this end. These occasions were (1) the promulgation of the Beatitudes, (2) the giving of the Lord's Prayer, and (3) the utterance of the Seven Words upon the Cross.

These three teachings are unique, whether we have regard to the solemnity of the occasion on which they were spoken—the first two in the Sermon on the Mount, the last upon our Lord's death-bed—or to the importance of the principles enunciated in them.

In each we observe seven clearly defined divisions, and on closer examination we discover in each the same seven fundamental truths—arranged in a

different order, but on comparison found to be substantially the same. The changes in arrangement are accounted for by the difference of the occasion, and by the object which our Lord had in view at the time.

Passing over the Lord's Prayer as foreign to our purpose to-day, let us consider the close relation which subsists between our Lord's teaching in the Beatitudes and in the Words from the Cross. In other words, let us to-day take "the Seven Words" in the light of the Beatitudes.

The same underlying principles are found in both, because, as we have observed, both alike are intended to meet the fundamental needs of human nature, which are always the same. In taking them together, however, we shall find that the Beatitudes throw new light on the Words from the Cross.

That our meditations may be helpful, dear brethren, we need two things; and in the moments for silence and prayer which follow this introductory address I want you earnestly to ask GOD for them.

We need, first, the help of the Holy Ghost—His illuminating power—to bring our Lord's Words home to our souls; for without His help we can do nothing. And I would ask you, therefore, to say a

word of prayer for the preacher, that he may be guided by the Holy Ghost in his interpretation of these solemn Words; but especially a prayer for yourselves, that you may rightly apply them to your own soul's need, so that they may be really helpful to you.

And, secondly, there is need of real effort on your part; three hours is a long time, and we must expect to experience weariness in our endeavour to keep our mind concentrated for so long a time. We may be sure, too, that Satan will do his best to suggest wandering thoughts to us to-day. We shall have to endure weariness of body and weariness of mind; let us resolve, then, to make a real effort to meet this temptation. Say, "I will try to fight against wandering thoughts, and to concentrate my mind on my Blessed Lord's last words."

If we were standing by the death-bed of one whom we loved very dearly, our thoughts would not wander; we should hang upon every word, we should strive to catch the last faltering accents of the dying one. Then to-day, by the death-bed of our Lord Jesus Christ, say, "I will make a great effort, I will ask the Holy Ghost to help me, I will try not to lose anything of the precious legacy of my Lord's last words from the Cross."

II.

The First Word.

S. Luke xxiii. 34.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

HESE words were uttered, it is supposed, by our Lord just as the executioners had driven the nails through His hands and feet, perhaps even before they had raised the Cross and set it in its place. And they differ from all the other words in that they were spoken more than once. The word "said" is, in the Greek, in the imperfect tense, and implies that our Lord kept on saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Our Lord's prayer for His murderers was not uttered once only; it was spoken again and again as they went on with their dreadful work of cruelty. And in these words our Lord bears witness to the great virtue of meekness. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Meekness is the hardest and perhaps the most necessary of all virtues for our Anglo-Saxon race to acquire. Every race has its characteristic sin, and ours undoubtedly is the sin of pride. It is difficult for us to be meek. Our indignation is prone to show itself, we love to assert our rights, and this is the very opposite to being meek. This First Word of our Lord should therefore come home to us with special force, and we should pray for the grace of meekness.

But let me remind you that meekness has a great many counterfeits. Just because it is so valuable and important a virtue, is it often imitated, and we find indeed a great many spurious virtues which claim to be meekness, but are not. We shall know better what true meekness is if we examine some of these counterfeits.

First, there is the meekness of cowardice, of pusillanimity. This is not the meekness of which our Lord spoke in the second Beatitude, nor is it the meekness He manifested throughout His life and upon the Cross; for His was the meekness of courage and power. Then there is a meekness which is the outcome of sloth. The slothful man displays a spurious meekness just because he is too slothful to

assert himself. Again, there is the meekness which belongs to an amiable temperament, a temperament which dislikes ever to disagree with any one. This again is not real meekness.

And then again, there is the meekness of the man who has very little conviction of truth, and therefore never contends for truth; the meekness of the man who has very little appreciation of principle in his character, and therefore never stands up for principle. There is the meekness too of the weak character, influenced by every wave of popular opinion. And lastly, there is the meekness of the man who has no hatred of sin, and who feels no thrill of indignation against it.

All these are spurious virtues; there is no blessing attached to them. Such was not the meekness of our Lord. What was His meekness! It was the meekness of the strong man, conscious of His own strength and therefore able to be gentle and long-suffering to others, the meekness of the man of entire self-control, whose reason was unswayed by passion, the meekness of One Who was absolutely just, and therefore gave to everyone His rights. If you want to find a meek man in the true meaning of the word, and one who in some degree exhibits

the meekness which our Lord alone possessed in its perfection, you must turn to a man of great strength of character—for meekness is only another name for self-control, for the possession of the great virtue of justice.

Who was the meekest man in the Old Testament? Moses, we are told. Was he a weak man? No, he stands out upon the horizon of history as one of its greatest characters; a man who took a race of slaves and led them for forty years through a wilderness, enduring their murmurings, their rebellions, their many failures, until he had converted them into a nation of heroes, who conquered the land of Canaan and took it from peoples for generations trained to war.

And if we turn to the New Testament, who is the exemplar of meekness? Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He says, "Learn of Me, for I am *meek* and lowly in heart." Meekness, then, belongs to strength, for meekness does not mean yielding, because you do not care to contend for truth, because you have no principle to uphold,—but yielding in the power of perfect justice and self-control.

Now, how does our Lord show all this in His

First Word? He saw surging about His Cross a crowd upon whose upturned faces every form of sin had left its mark. They were murdering Him. What did He say? "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Meekness led Him to pray for those whom He could not reach in any other way. He tried to find some extenuating circumstance, "They know not what they do." This was true. They did not realize that He was the Son of God. They did not realize the awfulness of their sin.

It is always true, true of us all. When we sin, we do not realize what we do, or we could not sin. For the moment, we lose our sense of justice, of the awfulness of guilt, of the stain upon our soul, of the injury to our character. We know not what we do. We may know that what we are doing is very wrong, but at the moment we sin we are blinded, maddened, we know not what we do, and our Lord in His perfect justice pleads this fact for us.

We must be just, my brethren, if we would be meek; and justice recognizes in others what we would that they should recognize in ourselves. Those who injure us very often do not know what they are doing, do not realize how bitterly they

wound us. We must take the example of Him Who was our example in meekness, our Lord Jesus Christ, and pray for those who injure us, "Father, forgive them, as I desire to forgive them, for they know not what they do."

My brethren, how often we do exactly the opposite! When someone has wronged or injured us, do we not often say, "I am sure he did it on purpose! He knew how it would hurt me!" And how do we know that? We do *not know* it. And even if we did we should plead for him, for he perhaps did not realize how wicked was his action.

Our Blessed Lord says, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."* Our Lord in His meekness is like some solitary headland jutting out into the ocean, against which the storm-waves dash themselves again and again, but make no impression upon it. Each wave gathers its mighty force and hurls itself against the rock, only to fall back shattered, leaving the rock unmoved. So the meek and patient man is like a rock in this world; the floods of evil, the powers of wickedness, the forces of temptation hurl themselves

* S. Matt. xi. 29.

against him, but each, like the wave dashing against the rock, falls back shattered.

We see our Lord, in this First Word, as the Rock of Ages, unmoved upon the Cross, while the surging crowd, like the mighty waves of the ocean, beats and breaks upon Him with its malice and hatred, but falls back in the presence of His meekness. And He says, "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

There is a restfulness in meekness, a restfulness in patience. The irritable, passionate man is never at rest, but the meek man has such rest as can be found in this world. And, "blessed," or rather "*happy*, are the meek." There is a happiness in meekness.

What sin, should you say, causes the most unhappiness in this world? I am sure I should say, anger; fits of impatience and irritability in our own lives and in the lives of others. I do not mean that it is the greatest sin. There is something almost noble about it at times. But it causes the most general unhappiness. If I am in a bad temper, I am unhappy and generally make every one around me unhappy. How true is our Lord's Beatitude:

"Happy are the meek,"—those who do not give way to impatience and bad temper.

Let us kneel for a moment, and in silence pray to our Lord to give us more of this meekness. Hear Him say, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Hear Him say, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." And then pray: "O Lord, by the example of Thy Passion; by the power of Thy First Word, in which Thou didst pray for forgiveness for Thy murderers, I pray Thee, give me the virtue of justice, of meekness, of self-control."

III.

The Second Word.

S. Luke xxiii. 43.

"Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

"BLESSED are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

We are told that two malefactors were crucified with our Blessed Lord, and that at first both of them reviled Him. But, as the hours wore on, one of them was converted by the example of that wondrous patience and of that marvellous love which our Lord had manifested in praying for His murderers. The penitent robber was the first fruits of our Lord's prayer, "Father, forgive them." He joined with the mob in reviling Him at first, but he heard the words of meekness and love; they reached his heart, and the grace of the Passion began to work. First he rebukes his companion, and acknowledges the justice of his sufferings: "We receive

the due reward of our deeds, but this Man hath done nothing amiss." And then, turning to our Lord, he says, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom!" And Jesus answered and said, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

The prayer of Christ is heard at once, and the prayer of the poor penitent also. Grace has touched his heart, and he says, "Lord, give me a remembrance, give me a thought in the day of Thy triumph." And our Lord gives him more than he asks: "Not when I come into My Kingdom," He says, "but, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

Our Lord's work of mercy on the Cross! Mercy for a wretched robber, for a malefactor, who, perhaps, had spent the greater part of his life in sinning against GOD'S law. Yet when he turns and asks for pity, our Lord's merciful heart goes out to him. He gives Him pardon, and a share of His Kingdom!

Mercy! The first great act of mercy on the part of GOD was creation; it was GOD'S mercy that called all creatures into being. The most splendid act of GOD'S mercy was the Incarnation, when, in

mercy to the human race, the Second Person of the Ever-Blessed Trinity, being in the Form of God, emptied Himself, took upon Him the form of a servant, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. The Incarnation, with its mighty consequence, the Atonement, is the greatest act of mercy we can conceive.

All our Lord's earthly life, too, was a work of mercy, as He went to and fro through the length and breadth of the Holy Land, healing the sick, casting out evil spirits, raising the dead, preaching the Gospel to the poor. His life was essentially the life of mercy upon earth; and so, too, in His death upon the Cross is He merciful.

I want you to observe, my brethren, the relation of the First and Second Words to each other, as well as that of the corresponding Beatitudes. It is very close. Mercy is the active side of meekness. Meekness is the passive attitude of our soul towards our neighbour. It springs from justice, as mercy does from love; justice leads us to try to see things from our neighbour's point of view, but love impels us to work for our neighbour's soul. Love restrains us from judging our neighbour harshly, but mercy

impels us to try to help and to save our neighbour—to visit the sick, to bury the dead, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked—the works which our Lord's life showed so wonderfully, and which we call "the works of mercy."

But there is a difficulty about mercy. Many of us are puzzled at times about the relation of mercy to justice. People say, "How can one be merciful, and yet be just? Does not justice require that sometimes we should not be merciful?" Not if we understand the true explanation of the relation of mercy and justice. Mercy consists in seeing possibilities of good in an individual soul which has gone a long way towards evil—believing in the possibility of good in your fellow-men. I suppose there is no vocation which affords such opportunities of knowing both the good and evil in men as a priest's, and I assure you that my experience has been that even among the most hardened and sinful there is a spark of good in the soul, which, if only you can fan it rightly, will burn up into a flame that will enkindle the whole nature.

Our Blessed Lord saw in the thief, in spite of his evil life, a possibility of good; for mercy recognizes such possibilities in a character far gone towards

evil. Justice, on the other hand, is not in any sense contrary to mercy, but is the seeing things as they are, seeing a character in which the possibilities of good have been trampled out by sin. But remember that GOD, Who knows the hearts of men, is the only one *now* who can tell when this is the case. At the Last Day His justice will be finally manifested; for then there will be no more possibilities of good for those who are evil, and therefore no more room for mercy. Justice then will be all that is left.

But so long as we are in the world, until we have finally hardened our conscience and ruined our soul, GOD is always merciful. S. Peter asked, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times?" And Jesus answered, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven."* Go on forgiving; go on believing in the possibilities of good in your neighbour.

If you want to save a soul, my brethren, the way is, to *believe* in the salvability of that soul! How often a man, sunk deep in the mire of sin, is saved because some person has trusted him! Then begins the growth of goodness in that soul; the sinner says,

* S. Matt. xviii. 21.

"There is one who believes in me, one who trusts me, and I cannot, will not, disappoint that trust!" Mercy goes out actively to help our neighbour, to work for him, to try to save him.

But just as meekness has its counterfeits, so has mercy. The great imitation of mercy in the present day is philanthropy. The world teems with philanthropic schemes that are not "mercy" at all. The very word "philanthropy" shows us that. It means something that springs from love of man. Mercy is that which comes from love of GOD; the foundation of mercy must always be divine love. Our Lord says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Here the second flows from the first. You must love GOD first, if you would love your neighbour in the best and truest sense, and if you do love GOD you cannot but love your neighbour.

But mere philanthropy begins the other way. Its motive is generally a selfish one—to attain prominence, to win popularity, to gain the praises of men, or even, perhaps, to gratify some hobby.

Mercy, on the other hand, is the love of GOD, which has set fire to your own soul, and the conflagration spreads, and kindles other souls.

But a word of warning here: in your love of your neighbour, do not forget your own soul. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*." Many people in the present day are so interested in working for the souls of others that they pay but scant attention to the needs of their own souls. They have no time, no energy, no thought to devote to their own spiritual needs. I would plead with you to-day, my brethren, for your own souls. Be merciful to your own souls! What is it which is destroying your soul? What is your darling sin? What is it that is ruining that which might be so fair in you? Hear the cry of your own soul, "Remember me to-day! Thou hast remembered the poor in the past; perhaps thou hast done much to help the sinful." Remember the needs of thine own soul now. Repent of thy sins, and save thine own soul!

Our Lord's life, as I have said, was the great life of mercy, and yet, He spent thirty years at Nazareth, taking care of His soul, developing it into absolute perfection; and then, three years and a half in ministering to others. Remember this, dear brethren,

and give your own souls at least as much as you give to others. Do not say, "It does not matter what I believe and do, so long as I am doing good to others." Hearken to your own soul, crying to you in the words of the penitent thief; and remember its needs to-day!

IV.

The Third Word.

S. John xix. 26, 27.

"Woman, behold thy son! . . . Behold thy Mother!"

OUR dear Lord, in the midst of all His agony, thinks of every one. First, He thinks of His murderers; then of one who has sinned against and reviled Him, but now desires to repent and be His friend; and lastly, of His Mother and S. John. Here, my brethren, we have brought before us the recognition of the claims of home life. With them, of course, is associated the Beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Home life without purity is impossible. Those nations in which the virtue of purity is most ignored are nations in which home life is weakest. And amongst ourselves, in society, the spread of impurity, or rather of its recognition by divorce, is the means by which homes are being broken up to-

day. How stern we should be on this great question, this question which is eating out the morals of society, and is especially before our own Church in the present day! How determined we should be to let no mawkish sentiment influence us to recognize that shocking parody of law which legalizes adultery under the flimsy pretence of affording relief in a few hard cases!

Purity is the basis of home life. Without it homes are broken up. We all know, alas, in our own experience, of homes rent asunder, children growing up to manhood and womanhood without any of the chastening influences of a wholesome family life, and all because of the dire sin of impurity in their parents, recognized and legalized by the Divorce Court.

And it is in this Third Word that our Lord recognizes purity as the basis of home life. He says, "Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy Mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." It was the beginning of a new home; the home of purity, the home of the Virgin Disciple, and of the Virgin Mother.

These two stand out as the great examples of

purity. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see GOD." Who on earth ever saw GOD as did Mary, the blessed Mother of GOD; and who ever was so near to the Son of GOD as was the beloved disciple, who leaned upon His bosom? Could this have been possible if there had come between them the cloud of impurity?

But here our Lord recognizes not only home life, but friendship. He not only provides for His Mother a home and a dutiful son, but He thinks of His friend in the hour of his need.

Friendship, like home affection, is based largely upon purity. How beautiful a thing friendship is; how stimulating to nobility of character it ought to be! As we read the lives of great and good men, how often we find two friends with one common aim and object in life, some great ideal for which they make sacrifices, each stimulating the other's zeal and devotion in the common cause. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." *

Friendship ought to be helpful. How often a friend has brought another friend to Jesus! Philip, when he found our Lord, went and sought his friend

* Prov. xxvii. 17.

Nathanael and brought him to Christ. Think of the stimulating, elevating power of a good friend!

There are, however, three great dangers connected with friendship.

(*i.*) One is, that it may become selfish. My dear brethren, how often you care for your friends just because they minister to your own selfishness! Do any of you give way to jealousy? Jealousy is selfish friendship; friendship which says of the object of its affection, "I will enjoy his love, and no one else shall!" It is not your friend's happiness, welfare, or devotion to duty that you care for, but to possess him exclusively, to have him for yourself alone. Such selfishness spoils friendship.

(*ii.*) But there is something worse—friendship which has not purity as its basis; what the world, in its love of euphemisms, calls "Platonic friendship." The world hates, as a rule, to call sin by its true name, because if it did, it would be so horrible that people would not so easily sin; and when in this case it speaks of certain relationships between those of opposite sex as "Platonic friendships," it generally means a friendship which has impurity as its bond.

(*iii.*) And then, yet again, friendship may be the

means of spiritual ruin and loss. What can be more dreadful than the influence of a bad friendship; where one friend leads the other to unbelief; where, instead of helping one another to meet the difficulties of faith, and to cling to GOD, they drag one another down and help each other to lose faith in GOD, to give up all devotion to duty.

Consider, then, these words of our Lord as expressing His recognition of the claims of home life and of the power of friendship, each based upon purity; and let your example be that of the Virgin Mother and the Virgin Disciple.

V.

The Fourth Word.

S. Matt. xxvii. 46.

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

WITH these words the climax of the Passion is reached. Thick darkness gathers around the Cross. S. Mary and S. John have left it, for we are told that he took her away to his own home. Jesus is alone, without friends; the darkness gathers around Him, and out of that darkness there comes the bitter cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Our Lord has thought first of His neighbours. He has remembered His murderers, shown mercy to the penitent robber, cared for His Blessed Mother and His friend. Now He turns away from the world, and thinks of the needs of His own soul. This Word and the next tell of the needs of His Human Nature.

He was perfect Man. By these Words in His

Passion He reminds us that He had a human nature like ours; that He was subject to all that we are subject to, sin only excepted; that He knew temptation, sorrow, and pain. He says, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and thus He teaches us what we find so hard to learn—that there is a blessing in sorrow and suffering. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted,"* is the Beatitude which corresponds to this Word.

"Happy are they that mourn." What! Happiness and mourning together? How is this possible?

Some of you have experienced the bitterest of sorrows, and yet have known what it was to have the Holy Ghost the Comforter binding up the wounds of your soul, so that in the mourning you found happiness.

Our Lord thinks of Himself. It is the great mystery of dereliction of which He speaks—a mystery, and therefore we cannot entirely penetrate it. We know, as a matter of faith, that there could be no separation in the Hypostatic Union. We know as a matter of theology that His human soul was never deprived, even for a moment, of the

* S. Matt. v. 4.

Beatific Vision. And yet, as theologians teach us, in the lower part of that soul He felt, as we sometimes do, the tremendous trial of GOD apparently turning away His Face from Him.

Sometimes we do not see the sun for days—it is cloudy, we say—and it depresses our spirits; but we know that the sun is just as near us, and will shine upon us when the clouds have rolled away. So in our Lord's Passion there was no separation from His Eternal Father. The dark clouds of the sin of the world rolled in upon our Lord's Human Nature, but He was never for one moment forsaken by GOD.

You know sometimes what it is to pray when prayer is very difficult, in times of severe sorrow, distress, temptation, or physical weakness; GOD seems far off, and yet you know that He is not, that He is as near as ever. This is what our Lord seems to teach us here—that He enters into all human sorrow, and that He knows even the sorrow of GOD's seeming withdrawal of Himself.

He does not say, "O GOD," but, "My GOD." There is no loss of faith, no doubt, as some people suppose. "My GOD, why is this Thy will?" How often we say, "O my GOD, why dost Thou

try me so? Why dost Thou seem to hide Thy face from me and to close Thine ears to my prayers?" God is just as near as ever; He is trying us. As our Lord said to His disciples once, "A little while, and ye shall not see Me; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me." All our life is made up of those alternations of mourning and joy, and often the mourning is best for us. Our Lord teaches us in this Word that He has experienced this sorrow.

And then, dear children of Jesus, you know that Sorrow, who is king in this world, has brought with him a companion, whose glorious presence is one of the greatest blessings of life, and the name of that companion is Sympathy. What has not sympathy done, what does not sympathy do, every day in this world! If I had not known sorrow I should never have known sympathy. If the sorrow of the Cross had not come into my life I should never have known what it was to feel the grasp of a helping hand, to hear the sound of a friendly voice saying, "I am sorry for you."

I remember in England years ago a young girl who was constantly in terrible suffering, hardly ever free from pain. It used to help me to go to see her; she was so gentle and patient, and bore her pain so

well. And when any sympathetic allusion to her sufferings was made, she would say, "I don't mind it very much, because every one is so kind to me, every one sympathizes with me. It is worth bearing the pain to have the sympathy." Yes, sorrow did not come alone into the world; with sorrow was sent that glorious power, sympathy.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Yes, it is the special function of the Holy Ghost, as it is His special title, to be "the Comforter." What happiness, even on earth to have that oil of joy which He bestows in place of the spirit of mourning! The Holy Ghost is the Comforter in all our sorrows and woes. What is your sorrow? Is it the trial of ill-health from which there seems to be no escape? Is it distress of mind, for which there seems to be no relief? Is it the sorrow of a great loss, which seems irreparable in this life? GOD the Holy Ghost will comfort you in your sorrow, whatever it be.

When we look forth beyond this world, to heaven itself, what are we told will be one of its joys? That "GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." But how sad, then, my brethren, to have no tears for GOD to wipe away! Sorrow is, in a sense,

the raw material of joy. "Ye shall be sorrowful," said our Blessed Lord to His disciples, "but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." But those who have no sorrow, no pain in this life to turn into joy, how can they expect to have joy hereafter?

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." They shall have the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to minister to them. "My GOD, my GOD, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Why dost Thou allow me to have all these trials and sorrows? I know why. It is because they are for my good. It is because those whom Thou lovest Thou chastenest.

VI.

The Fifth Word.

S. John xix. 28.

"I thirst."

HE climax of the Passion is past; the darkness is rolling away from the Cross, and the last three Words are spoken in rapid succession. "I thirst"—"I am thirsty."

Our Lord has already revealed to us His sympathy in our mental sufferings. He had tested the very depths of human woe when He said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" In this Word, then, He assures us of His experience also of our bodily pains, in the torturing, feverish thirst which came over Him upon the Cross.

Here we have a refutation of the errors of Docetism; for we see that our Lord had a body which, like our own, could feel the pains of thirst. Like some fever-tossed patient, after a night of suffering, as the darkness rolls away our Lord says, "I am thirsty."

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." *

1. How wonderfully do the Beatitudes correspond to the Words from the Cross! "I am so thirsty!"

The various appetites of our nature were implanted in us by God in order to impel us to seek, and to do, that which is for our good.

(*i.*) The appetites of the *body*, hunger and thirst, for instance, impel us to eat and drink, because the body needs food to supply its waste. If we had no appetite the periods of eating and drinking would probably be so irregular, and so far apart, that the body would suffer. Appetite is both an incentive to, and a reward for, fulfilling certain functions which are necessary that the body may be preserved in health and strength.

(*ii.*) But there are also appetites of the *mind*, or, rather, an appetite—that strange passion of curiosity, the desire to know, which is so deeply implanted in every child of man. This it is which impels man to seek knowledge, for without it he would never undertake and persevere in the laborious toil which is necessary for the acquirement of knowledge.

God made the mind of man for truth, and in

* S. Matt. v. 6.

endowing it with the passion of curiosity he gave him that which would impel him to seek truth.

(*iii.*) But again, there is an appetite of the *soul*, the passion of love, the desire to possess the object of our love. Its true purpose is to impel us to seek GOD for His own sake, to love GOD. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." And what is righteousness? In the highest sense it is our Blessed Lord, for He is, as Jeremiah prophesied, "The Lord our Righteousness" *; and it is only in so far as His righteousness is imparted to us that we can ever be righteous. The appetite to love, the desire to possess, impels us then to seek Christ, Who alone can satisfy our affections, and Who gives Himself, to those who seek Him rightly, as their possession both now and in eternity.

2. Now not only has each part of our nature its own appetite, whose office it is to impel us to supply the needs of that part, but in order that the appetite may be satisfied, that the need may be rightly supplied, we must take into account the character of the food we eat; for all food is not alike—some nourishes, other does not, or only to a slight extent,

* Jer. xxiii. 6.

while some food is actually poisonous. And this is true of each part of our tripartite being.

(*i.*) We know that a very large proportion of the diseases of the body may be traced to the food we eat; that we eat what is not good for us, because it is pleasant to the palate; that we do not eat what is most nourishing, what is best for us, because perhaps it does not suit our dainty taste; or that, in either or both of these instances, we eat or drink to excess. We see the evil results of this in those whose digestive organs are out of order, and in the glutton and the drunkard.

As the health of the body depends upon its food being the right food, both in character and quantity, so is it with the health both of the mind and of the soul.

(*ii.*) We have already observed that the appetite of the intellect is curiosity, that its true food is truth—the knowledge of good; but in the world in which we live, as well as in the Garden of Eden, we find trees laden with fruit which promises a knowledge of good and evil. The mind's thirst to know needs to be disciplined, to be satisfied with the knowledge of good, of truth, of the food which GOD provides for the mind; but there is a terrible temptation

to try to assuage our thirst, to satisfy our curiosity, with a knowledge of evil—like some shipwrecked sailor in a boat without water, trying to satisfy his overpowering thirst with the salt water of the sea, which only increases it a hundredfold.

The pursuit of knowledge, how fascinating it is! and it is one of the few things in this life which do not pall upon us. The scholar, the scientist, the student in almost any of the pathways of legitimate knowledge, how much satisfaction they find in the draughts of truth which they quaff!

It is not so with other pleasures—they mostly lose their charm, and a man or woman of the world becomes *blasé*—but no one ever became *blasé* with knowledge, that is, with right knowledge. The student may grow old, but he never tires of his work, for he ever sees before him new fields of investigation, promising ever richer harvests than those he has already reaped.

But the noblest appetites are capable of the greatest perversion, and the danger to the appetite of curiosity is that we may feed it with poison. Thus it was with our first parents in the Garden of Eden, they might eat of all the trees of the garden, for the body then had not sinned; and for the soul there

was the fruit of the tree of life; but the intellect needed discipline, the passion of curiosity needed restraint. There was one tree of which they must not eat—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

This was the avenue by which the devil approached Eve—through the intellect, through the passion of curiosity. The bait he offered was, "In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil." *

The temptation was yielded to, the bait was taken, and what was the result? The intellect was flooded with filth; knowledge of good, how little! knowledge of evil, how great! knowledge of its power to wreck man's happiness, to separate man from GOD.

We have the same nature as Eve, the same passion of curiosity, and Satan approaches us with the same temptation to eat of the forbidden tree, to know good and evil, to feed our mind with poison. There are people who feed their bodies with poison—the opium eater, the victim of morphine, or cocaine, or alcohol. And what is its effect? An unhealthy stimulation, deadening care for a time, imparting for a while a strange brilliancy, conjuring up morbid but

* Gen. iii. 5.

fascinating visions of an unreal world ; and then the penalty—ruin, the wreck of mind and body and soul.

What is the literature with which the press teems to-day ? Poison, three-fourths of it, poison ! The literature of infidelity, of impurity, of anarchy. A literature which stimulates you to desire what you cannot have without sin, to be discontented with your lot in life, to turn away from the wholesome food of the mind with dissatisfaction, if not with disgust.

And what is the argument Satan uses ? The same that he used with Eve—" Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." You ought to know both good and evil, you ought to know everything.

It may be the duty of some to study the character of poisons, that they may warn men against them, or provide an antidote ; but a toxicologist does not investigate the character and power of poisons by feeding on them. Satan, however, tempts us to feed the intellect with poison, that we may, like the opium eater, experience the sensation of a morbid, poisoned mind.

A book is written which is known to be unsound in faith or morals, but it is recommended by its exquisite literary style, or by the boldness of its revelations of

the mysteries of evil. You read it, and you say, "It was so fascinating I could not lay it down till I had finished it, and now I cannot get it out of my mind." Those arguments against the faith, those suggestions of impurity! Yes, they have wounded your memory, they have injured your imagination, they have poisoned your intellect, and the day will come when you would give worlds not to have read that book, never to have taken that poison into your system, never to have learned that new temptation; surely the old ones were hard enough to resist.

When tempted to poison your mind with the food of the knowledge of evil, remember our Lord in His Passion. "They gave Him vinegar to drink *mingled with gall*, and when He had tasted thereof He would not drink." * He would not drink that which would have deadened His mind, even though it would also have deadened His sensibility to pain.

When He was thirsty He drank of the vinegar, the sour wine, that is, which the soldiers used, the legitimate means of assuaging His thirst, but the medicated draught He refused. Satisfy your curiosity, your thirst for knowledge, from the streams of truth, but refuse the poisoned draught, the knowledge of evil.

* S. Matt. xxvii. 34.

(*iii.*) There is yet another part of our nature to be thought of—the soul. It has its appetites, the passion of love—to love and to be loved—to possess and to be possessed. It needs its food. With what are you feeding your soul? with the food which the world offers you: flattery, admiration, popularity, praise, the love of money? or—the love of GOD? GOD implanted that passion of love in your soul that you might love Him, that desire to be loved that you might find your supreme happiness in basking in the light of His love.

What is the food of the soul? The Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. But you cannot be feeding on Him, possessing Him, and at the same time be feeding upon the poison which the world offers you.

In one of our Lord's parables we have set before us the human soul in its deepest degradation, driven to eat the food of the vilest animals. We read, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, of one who, having left his own country and his father's house, "would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat." *

How many are trying vainly to assuage the hunger of their immortal souls with the husks of this world's

* S. Luke xv. 16.

food—admiration, popularity, praise, power, money. But all alike in the end find that such things cannot satisfy, though few, perhaps, like the prodigal, "come to themselves," realize their folly, and return as penitents to their Father's house. For such, as S. Chrysostom and others tell us, the fatted calf is slain, the table of the Lord is prepared, the Body and Blood of Christ Himself is given to be their food.

"I thirst." Our Blessed Lord in these words witnessed to His true Humanity, that He had the same appetites that we have, sin excepted. In refusing the medicated potion and accepting the sour wine of the soldiers, He teaches us to refuse that food which is but poison, and to accept and to ask for the true food of our tripartite nature. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

VII.

The Sixth Word.

S. John xix. 30.

"It is finished."

THE cry of victory, the cry of triumph, "It is finished!" What was finished? All that our Lord had come into the world to do,—His Father's Will, His Father's work; for He had said, "My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." * All was finished. Prophecy was fulfilled, type was accomplished; the Sacrifice, by which the world was to be redeemed, had been offered—and accepted. "It is finished," said our Lord.

And how does this correspond to the beatitude of the peacemakers? We must bear in mind that the word here translated "peacemakers" is precisely "those who work peace," not, as some suppose,

* S. John iv. 34.

"those who are peaceable." It is not εἰρηνικοί, but εἰρηνόποιοι,—those who are working peace.

What did our Lord come into the world to do? To make peace amid its strife. Our Lord was the Prince of Peace, and this blessing is for those who are not merely "the children of GOD," but in a special sense "the *sons* of GOD," in that they are sharers in the work of the Only-begotten Son of GOD in this world, the work of reconciling the world to GOD, the work of making peace.

Christ found the world at war, and when and where and how did that war begin? Long ages back, in heaven, when Lucifer raised the standard of revolt, and said, "I will be like GOD." He was met by S. Michael at the head of the heavenly host, and was cast out of heaven on to this earth.* Once, then, as Revelation tells us, "there was war in heaven"; now all is peace there.

Afterwards, by the fall of Adam, man became involved in this warfare, and found himself at war with GOD, against Whom he had rebelled, Whom he had disobeyed; at war with nature around him; the ground brought forth to him thorns and thistles. And man awoke to find that he was even at war

* Rev. xii. 7.

with himself; his reason and his passions both striving for the control of his will; now one, now the other, gaining the mastery.

This war went on until the Second Person of the Ever-Blessed Trinity became incarnate, not that He might live a peaceable life, but that He might be the Peacemaker, that He might enter the battle-field, and defeat the hosts of evil. The battle reached its climax on Calvary. There the powers of evil did their worst. They hounded on all that was vile and sinful in man to crucify the Son of God, and in doing this they overreached themselves, and enabled the great Captain of our salvation to win the victory. And just before our Lord dies He says, "It is finished." Peace is made; the battle is won; the warfare, to a certain extent, is over. It is finished!

There are certain laws with regard to war and peace which we observe in studying political economy.

1. The first is that peace is almost always the result of war. Nations at peace can look back to the time when they won that peace on the battle-field. There the terms of peace were signed, when the victory had been gained. In the political, as well as in the spiritual world, peace is the outcome, the result of war. To put off war in order to obtain an unreal

peace is not true political economy. There are times when a man or a nation must fight for liberty and right in the world, and there are times when a man must fight for liberty and truth and right in the Church of GOD, and in his own soul. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, came into the world to be the Captain of our salvation. He did not shrink from the fight, and when it was over He uttered this Word, "It is finished"; the war was over. He had made peace between GOD and man, and He had made peace possible in man's own soul. Not entirely had He made peace between man and the world; for the earth still produces its thorns and thistles, the whole creation still groans and travails,* waiting for the manifestation of the sons of GOD, when it shall be delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of GOD.

2. But there is another law in political economy: that, in order to preserve the peace which we have won, we must be always prepared for war. What is the meaning of the vast armaments which tax to their utmost the resources of the great nations of Europe? Is it that these nations desire war? No, they want peace. But to have peace they realize

* *Cf.* Rom. viii. 19-24.

that they must be ready to fight, for they know that, if the day ever comes when they allow their strength to wane, their peace will be destroyed, and their rights, if not their liberty, taken from them by a stronger nation. So in our own souls we not only need to fight, and to win the victory,—as I trust we have been trying to do this Lent,—but when we have won the victory, when the words of absolution have spoken peace to our souls, we must remember that we still need to wear our spiritual armour, to be ready with our spiritual weapons, to watch that we may resist the attacks of the foe, who, though often beaten, returns again and again to the fight.

3. Then there is a third law, which belongs, not to political, but to the spiritual economy only—that we can never help others until we have won the victory ourselves. If you can say to a struggling soul, "I have had the same temptation that you have, I have fought the same battle, and have won it, and so can you," then you can help and encourage that soul. You can teach it to use the means of grace which enabled you to win the victory. But if you have to say, "Yes, I tried to meet the same temptation which you tell me assaults you so often,

and makes your life such a burden, such a failure; but, alas! I was defeated, and am still the slave of that sin," you can be no help to your friend; nay, the very fact that you have not won the victory is rather a discouragement than a help. If you are to be a peacemaker,—I do not mean merely healing quarrels between man and man, but something higher, reconciling your fellow-man to GOD,—if you are to do the work of an evangelist in leading souls to Christ, if you are to help others to gain the mastery over their sins, you must first win the victory over your own. So long as you are shrinking back from the pain and toil of this conflict, you can accomplish nothing for yourself or for others. "Blessed are the peacemakers,"—those who are not only trying to be peaceable with other people, but are also trying to be evangelists, co-workers with the Prince of Peace in bringing souls to GOD.

"It is finished": the triumph-cry, the cry of victory rings out from the lips of Jesus. From the Cross He looked back over His life, and saw that all that He had come to do was done. We look back at times of self-examination upon our lives, and what do we see? So many things begun, so few finished. So many more, perhaps, thought of

in moments of generous impulse, but never even begun; and of those begun, so few really finished. This Lent we began with certain resolutions about conquering our sins, perhaps about helping others. How many of them have been kept, how many works finished? How many will bring forth fruit in our lives or in the lives of others after Easter.

How glorious to be a peacemaker! The peacemakers shall be called the *sons* of GOD, because they share in the work of the Only-Begotten Son of GOD. And the peacemakers are those who have not shrunk from the fight, and have won the victory.

VIII.

The Seventh Word.

S. Luke xxiii. 46.

"Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit."

OUR Lord's last words before His death, and therefore peculiarly solemn and important, for they reveal to us the supreme law of human life, the true secret of human happiness—Trust in God, dependence upon God for all things.

"Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."* In the Beatitudes this is the first, the foundation on which all the others rest; for happiness depends upon a right relation to God, a recognition of our dependence upon Him. In the Words from the Cross it is the last, that toward which all the others tend, and in which they

* S. Matt. v. 3.

culminate. It is as though our Blessed Lord would say to us with His last breath, "Trust GOD, leave all in His hands, and you will find happiness both in time and in eternity."

What is the root sin of our common nature? Pride. And what is the foundation of all Christian virtues? Humility.

Pride is essentially a false estimate of ourselves, while Humility has been defined as "knowing the *truth* about ourselves." And what is this truth about ourselves but that all that we are, and all that we have, comes from GOD, and depends upon GOD?

Blessed are the poor in *spirit*—not the poor only in this world's goods; for wealth is quite consistent with humility, and poverty often goes with pride.

Then, too, the word translated "poor" in the beatitude has not quite the same meaning as our word poverty. With us a poor man is one who has but little, but the Greek (οἱ πτωχόι) signifies "beggars," those who have nothing, and are dependent on the gifts of others for all things.

How perfectly this describes our relation to GOD! we are absolutely dependent upon Him for the gift of life, and for all that enables us to prolong life. And it is in the recognition, in the joyful realiza-

tion of this that our true happiness depends.

Everything essential to life, as well as the first gift of life, comes from GOD. We may, by our own efforts, acquire certain of the accidental addenda of life—this world's goods; but nothing essential. Not only life in its first beginning, but life in its daily conservation depends upon GOD; and the moment He sees fit to withdraw the gift, all those accidental accretions, which we have laboured so hard to amass, are ours no longer, are left behind.

What have I that I did not receive from GOD? My mind, of which I am so proud? But I might have been born, as some are, deficient in intelligence. My health and strength? They are GOD'S good gifts, for I see others around me who have them not. My position in life? GOD'S providence determined it, not I.

Three great truths are brought before us as we ponder on these things.

1. I come from GOD; I did not make myself.

2. I belong to GOD; I am His steward, and must give an account for all I do.

3. I shall go to GOD when I die; either as His child, to live with Him for all eternity in the joys of His love, or as a rebel, to be cast out of His presence,

and to spend my eternity with other rebels—angels and men.

All around me in this world are the creatures. They also come from GOD; so far as they have any real beauty, it is the reflected beauty of GOD. They were created to minister to my needs, to be tokens of GOD'S love and care for me. They should lead me to love GOD; Satan, however, tries to use them as the instruments of my temptation, to persuade me to set my affections on them, so that they may come between me and GOD. They are mine to use as GOD'S steward, but one day I must give an account of my stewardship.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit." Those who realize their dependence upon GOD for all things, who receive from GOD'S Hand their daily bread—food for the mind—the truth which He has revealed in Christ; food for the body—the creatures which minister to their needs; food for the soul—the bread of life, the bread of heaven, the Body and Blood of Christ Himself.

Pray day by day, "O GOD, my Father in heaven, give us this day our daily bread." And take your food from no other hand than GOD'S; so will you escape the poison from which so many suffer and die.

The Seventh Word.

Let your happiness be to realize your dependence upon GOD in all things; and, in joy and sorrow, in success and failure, in health or sickness, to learn always to say, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

THE END.

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